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What I have learned from peace activism in the world

*Koozma J. Tarasoff**

For over 60 years I have worked to promote a world without wars, and I am still trying. Among the groups that I have supported are the following: Society of Friends (Quakers), Canadian Friends Service Committee, Mennonite Central Committee, War Resisters International, War Resisters League, Project Plowshares, Voice of Women for Peace, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Center for Global Nonkilling, Canadian Initiative for Department of Peace, World Federalist Movement, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Coalition to Oppose Arms Trade, Physicians for Global Survival, United Nations Association of Canada, Canadian Peace Alliance, Gandhi Information Centre, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Train Foundation, Operation Dismantle, Canada - USSR Association, Canadian Peace Research Institute, Peace Quest, Center for Citizen Initiative, Transcend International (and Transcend Media Service), and World Beyond War.

My ancestors, the Russian Spirit Wrestlers / Doukhobors (Tolstoyans in spirit) burnt their guns in 1895 and I was brought up to believe that it is wrong to kill another human being. The yearly anniversaries in June remind me how forward looking my ancestors were in making their stand for a world without war. Perhaps they were ahead of their time as Lev N. Tolstoy wrote in the late 1800s?

Since the early 1950s, countless stories, petitions, marches, visits, and talks have shown me the potential of what one person in cooperation with others can do. Here is what I learned from being a small but urgent voice for peace:

It is no longer a 'we' 'they' issue today in the nuclear age. The Hiroshima 'baby' atom bomb destroyed the city and cost the lives of hundreds of thousands. The new A-bombs are now over 1,000 times more destructive. The most urgent issue for the peace movement today is PREVENTION. The 'bunker mentality' that we can win a nuclear war is a very dangerous illusion because the destruction of civilization is at stake. So let's prevent war using all of the skills that we can to invent peace.

Hatred and fear of the unknown have no future. Love is the way. This is the fundamental wisdom of the ages. There is a saying that if you love, you are God. So let's get more loving in this world and give peace a chance.

Getting to know the stranger is the first step in any communications. A friendly gesture ought to be our eternal beacon throughout life. The handshake, a respectful comment, various bridge-building initiatives, travel abroad, home visits, and an accurate story of the 'other' goes a long ways to create a culture of peace. Let's cease demonizing people and instead look for ways to visualize a positive outcome for all.

Distinguishing 'fake news' from 'real news' is a challenge in today's world when much of the mainstream media is owned by corporate interests which often fund the military and influence news coverage. We need to search for the truth above the din of propaganda and be open to learning from wisdom people such as Lev N. Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Albert Einstein. Reading, observing, listening, speaking out, visualizing, and writing are some of our learning tools.

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Remember that war and militarism sucks out much of our human services — so we need to actively question our foreign policy.

The thesis of 'nonkilling' is a useful strategy for peace. Developed by Dr. Glenn D. Paige, nonkilling shares the same family as nonviolence, but it is measurable and leads to a killing-free world. We don't need to kill people to get their resources, but we can respect others and share what we have. Negotiate a shared 'win win' reality.

Are we not people of one human race, with a common interest in surviving on Planet Earth? I think so. Consider the following connections that need to be addressed in the survival equation: (1) poverty and profit; (2) the relationship of nuclear war and foreign intervention; (3) equality and racism' (4) environmental pollution and corporate profit; (5) violence and television; and (6) the perceived cold war mental set of the 'Russian threat'.

The Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky once said that 'beauty will save the world'. Perhaps he was right. Beauty within our hearts radiates powerful healing waves of behaviour. We do not need to murder people and destroy property for the sake of power. We can learn to respect people as beautiful members of our human family. Let us visualize friendship as a desired human endeavour.

We need to be humble in working to change the world. Firstly, we need to do our homework and learn the truth about our world. Secondly, we need to have the right intent saying 'Peace is the way of the future.' Regime change and sanctioned murder, should not be part of our vocabulary. Could you imagine what the world would look like if we did not ruin our civilization with wars and regime changes?

The bedrock values of nonkilling peace, friendship, cooperation, reconciliation and human development ought to be instilled early beginning in public schools. These are the seeds of the future. Children need to learn to cooperate instead of being primarily competitive so as to become truly curious

and responsible in being peacemakers rather than military warriors.

To ease the transition from war economy to a peace economy, our governments ought to immediately build structures for peace, such as creating well-funded Departments of Peace in our parliaments.

With the challenges of peace, climate change, terrorism, inequality, population growth, and resource allocation, we need to become partners in development. This means working together to build a better society for all.

New laws are urgently needed. For example, we need to focus on making war a crime against humanity. For me, nothing less makes sense for the survival of the human race. I'm surprised that today many people are still dependent on the gun and the bomb for their security. A shift in thinking is urgently needed. Saving humanity from the scourge of war is a better option and the primary goal of the United Nations.

Patience is a good quality for peace workers. A small step for peace is a large step for humanity. After over 60 years of active peace making, I am still hoping to experience a world without wars. In the 1950s I edited and published *The Inquirer* with a search for a peaceful world. Today, 2017, I use my voice (and record visuals with my camera) in speaking out for nonkilling peace on my Spirit Wrestlers website and blog. I have hope for humanity.

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Paradise

*J. Meena Devi**

KE: Oh Prince of Paradise! Epitome of perfection! We welcome you to our planet! Light surrounding you is brighter than sun and moon! Your eyes are twinkling like billions of stars in the dark night sky! Your heavenly presence has purified the air of our planet and made it more fragrant than Tulasi, Sandal, Roses and Jasmines. The whole Earth is excited by seeing your graceful face. Because of your entry into Earth, even the sea water has become so sweet like honey; even the wall of our world is smiling sweetly; even the sand grains of our ground have got eager ears to listen to you.

PP: Oh King of Earth! You are prasing me too much. I have drenched in the rain of your lovely words.

KE: This is my pleasure. You are so humble. My mind is flying in ecstasy. The languages I know are not sufficient to describe your superior character and great personality. You are a gentle man. Honesty is your heart beat. Modesty is your mantra. You are a soft, strong, sweet, stable, kind and considerate person. You talk only truth. Love flows as blood in your body. Nothing in this Universe can shake your mental determination. Your courage is taller than Mount Everest. You are a versatile genius. My heart is overflowing with the ocean of praise for you. But I have expressed only a few drops of it.

PP: Again you are praising me too much. I have my own strength and shortcomings. I focus on my positive points and I take effort to improve myself every day. We all grow by the process of evolution. Anyway I thank you so much for your true love, affection and understanding.

PE: You have billions of serious commitments on your shoulders. But yet you are always so cool, calm, composed and cheerful. What is the secret behind it?

PP: I have born to do it. My work is my joy. Do your best and leave the rest to God.

PE: Your principle is great! You are a KarmaYogi. I worship you.

PP: Why so many people are running madly here wasting their life time and entire energy?

KE: They are running madly behind money.

PP: MONEY???! Can money give everything? One day, you made money for your comfort in this planet. But today for many, money is everything in life. I could not understand this madness for materialistic life.

KE: Money is essential for survival in our planet.

PP: Is survival alone enough? Life is a blessing. Being the evolved human beings, don't you give importance to live the glorious life of infinite dimesion?

KE: Many times, we forget that we are evolved beings. In this God given wonderful mega mansion, there are infinite rooms. But sadly, we have have knocked only some doors and opened only few rooms. We are very small and narrow minded. We frequently forget to broaden our view and vision. We tie our mind with a short string to a small pole and revolve around that small circle.

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PP: Why there are criminals roaming in this planet who will kill their own fellow human beings, family members and intimate relations for the sake of poor money, enmity and hatred? What do they get out of it? Can they sleep peacefully or smile joyfully?

KE: We cannot understand the working of minds and brains of demons and devils.

PP: Plants, trees, animals, birds and insects are living happily together in Earth without money and enmity.

KE: They are simple and content. They take only what they need and give the rest to others. They don't suffer from excessive lust and madness. They don't have any geographical, political boundaries and other divisions. They accept their natural diversity. So they are united and happy. Some human beings are very greedy and unloving. They have unlimited materialistic desires and violence which veil their eyes.

PP: Why there are sick people suffering from life time disease of animal instinct violence, chemical addiction to alcohol, drugs, etc and bio-chemical addiction to uncivilized physical pleasure? Did Lord Brahma created us to walk in the path of self-destruction? Is self-love not important to people?

KE: Some people have beautiful brain and they think wisely and act. Some people have better brain and they get message from the surrounding and they improve and discipline themselves. Some people don't use their brain and so the brain becomes dull. Life will teach them unforgettable lessons one day.

PP: Why there is so much of self-centeredness, isolation, ignorance, discrimination, inequality, hatred, violence, exploitation and suffering all around this planet? Why not all six billion of you live together peacefully and happily in this beautiful blue planet of blue sky, green plants, yellow sun, white moon, colorful flowers, dancing wind, singing birds, and sparkling running water?

KE: My dear Star! You are all well united and live together happily and peacefully in your paradise.

You celebrate your life with the joy of love and togetherness. You are all good and loving people. You measure your life with love, truth, sincerity, goodness, joy, peace, perfection, excellence, devotion, spirituality, intellectual fruits, holistic art, constructive knowledge, wisdom, individual and group achievement/ accomplishment, mission, service, unity and creativity. You are gifted with strong healthy body, divine loving heart, beautiful broad mind, intelligent sharp brain and glowing awakened soul. In a nutshell, the residents of paradise are all ideal people. You don't have anything called money, exploitation, slavery and killing in your kingdom. You have good working culture. No one is idle and lazy in your land. All of you are vibrant, active and energetic. All of you work and take what you need and like with moral values. You don't have poverty of wealth, discipline, values and character. You are rich in love, values and character. You live a rich, positive, peaceful, loving, meaningful and joyful life. All of you live like Kings and Queens in your world. We are longing for paradise. We have seen paradise only in our sweet dreams.

PP: My beloved King of Earth! You are most welcome to our sweet home paradise!

KE: I wish to come to your sweet home some day. People living in paradise are the most happy people in this Universe.

PP: We are very specific about our happiness. We respect individuality and unity in diversity. We are gentle and peaceful. Happiness is our strength. Happiness is a source of energy to do our work effectively and to live our life peacefully. Do what you love and love what you do. Being true to one 'self' gives eternal joy. Helping oneself and others gives us great joy and strength. Being independent and self-reliant reduces much pain and makes us more healthy and happy.

Lies, pseudo faces can never give long lasting happiness. Happiness can never sit in the cave of enmity, hatred, jealousy, hyper-ego, comparisons, calculations and competitive attitude. Happiness

blooms in the fertile field of unconditional love, affection, courage, positive thinking, perseverance, patience, forgiveness, sportive spirit and unity. Loving and loyal relationships are the great assets of life. Love and loving relationships give eternal joy.

We are living in an interactive network. No one always loses. No one always wins. Being humble and determined at the time of victories and being strong at the time of failures make this drama a joyful journey for all of us. There is interconnectivity between the incidents and events that happen in our life. There is interconnectivity between the people we meet in our life. We should know what we are doing. We should take responsibility of what we are doing. Our honest King Chitrugupta maintains the record of what all we have done. We reap what we sow. What we do today, decides our tomorrow. Doing good deeds everyday is like building the fort of happiness, which we can relish even in our next birth.

Every living being born in this Universe has to undergo pain and suffering whether they happen to be a plant or insect or human being. That is unavoidable. Pain is not permanent. Dusk will become dawn. New Moon will become Full Moon. Summer will become Spring. Storm will become Breeze. Tears will become Smile. Our pain and sufferings are not our enemies. They are our Teachers. They raise our level. They develop us into refined persons. They make us strong, independent and matured and help us to see the world with the eyes of kindness. The Time, devotion, patience, work and love will heal our pain. The Faith, faith in ourselves, faith in life, faith in God will give us strength to handle our hard and crisis times. The continuous fight and courageous struggle against our suffering will end in victory. They will yield long lasting peace and happiness. They will guide us to walk in the right direction to reach our destination.

We are all just the tiny dots in front of the mysterious Nature and Supreme power. Humbleness and kindness will always help us. We cannot explain every thing. We have to accept what is not in our

hands. We have to do what is in our hands. What we know is very less and what we do not know is huge and vast. The thirst for search makes our life more meaningful and every day of our life will be amazing and exciting in finding new spring and valuable pearls.

All of us may have some common basic instincts and needs. Yet all of us have different deep driving desires, different situations, different commitments, different experiences in life and different expectations. The maturity of understanding and accepting the inherent differences leads us into the shrine of joy. Physical body of living beings will become handful of ashes one day. But our positive contributions to our loving hearts and society will live forever. The practical knowledge to differentiate transient and eternal things and functioning accordingly will maximize our joyful minutes.

We are not just our mortal biological body. Balancing all our different components (body, mind, heart, head, spirit and soul) of our living system, makes us more cool, calm, composed and cheerful. Self-knowledge is vital. Solitude is an elevating joy. Every day we should spend sometime with ourselves. Do travel inward and see your inner mind and listen to your inner voice. Our inner voice will clarify the confusion and show us the right direction. Self-esteem, self-respect, self-accountability and sincerity are the pillars of happiness. At the end of day, what counts is, what our heart says to us about ourselves.

We are living in a time bound world. The wheel of time never takes rest and it always runs in forward direction. Time is powerful. It changes many things. It brings many different people, faces, and many different incidents, rainbows, storms, breeze, unexpected transitions, unimaginable castles, messages, questions, events, emotions, shocks, surprises and scenes. What is available today may not be available tomorrow. Human life is very short. Each and every task/duty/work has to be completed in the allotted time frame. Everyones time is very precious. Time consciousness gives us joy which may win time.

KE: My hearty thanks to you for sharing your wisdom on happiness.

PP: Please record and remember whatever I have preached you.

KE: My Mentor! My Leader! You are my well-wisher. I will follow your golden words. Powerful Prince! Please help us... Shower your blessings and love upon us. Extend your service for this suffering planet. Please solve our problems.

PP: My love and blessings are always there for you. Life and problems are inseparable twins. The problems always come along with the solutions. Be patient. Think well from all directions. Be positive and proactive. God will definitely lend his helping hands for the whole-hearted positive effort of the good souls. God loves us so much.

Please express your unconditional love and affection for your people. Love is God. Love is power. Love will make people more responsible, committed and devoted global citizens of this planet. When people become sensible, responsible and dutiful, automatically problems and sufferings will be reduced.

Be strong and solve your problems by yourselves. In the process of solving your problems, you will become more strong. The painful problems we face, handle and solve in our life are the rigorous training given by our Divine Parents to nurture the growth of their loving children.

My dear friend! We have come to the end of our meeting. It is time for departure.

KE: Prince of Paradise! I have got your darshan! All the good deeds I have done in all my births have given me the golden opportunity of meeting you. I am extremely fortunate and blessed to meet a heavenly, immortal, godly person like you in my life. You are the visible God in super human form. My mind is very much satisfied today. Your love is the food for my hearts hunger. Your words of wisdom is the food for my souls hunger. Your intelligent,

integrated, harmonious thoughts, behaviour, words and actions are the great feast to my little brain. You are my Guruji! Please accept my special puja and offerings for you.

My Lord! You are my perennial source of inspiration. You are my role model. It is amazing to see your clarity and purity. I have listened to your preaching. My joy is boundless. My ecstasy is unlimited. All my skin, blood, flesh, nerves, bones and cells are electrified by your warm divine space. This is a miracle and a freezing moment. This is unbelievable! I have fallen in love with my life. My many centuries wish has become true today. This is not my dream! This is a wonderful reality in front of my eyes.

My Prince... I admire and adore you. I trust you. You are my gem. You are my intimate friend with whom I can talk openly straight from my mind and heart. You have touched my heart and roots. My hearty thanks for spending your precious time with us. My soulful thanks for all your enlightening words.

My Lamp... You are the Lamp of my heart shrine. You have given me the new vision. Now I feel so young and energetic. I will rule my kingdom well. I will do my duty with my full potential and ability. I will be positive and realistic. I will be kind and compassionate towards ignorant people. I will forgive my people for their weakness and imperfections. I will make them realise their strength and the greatness of love, humanity, peace, ahimsa, and the joy of unity. I will transform all the defective zones of our planet into prosperous region. This beautiful planet of our Universe will become the abode of all the good and loving people. It may take some time to achieve my mission. But I will definitely reach my goal in the near future.

PP: That is the spirit of King! Keep it up my dear friend! I thank you so much for all your good heart, love, sweet and loving words. I thank you so much for your whole-hearted warm hospitality. I am leaving now. Take good care of your home!

Gandhi & Aurobindo as Nationalists: A Comparison

*Edward T. Ulrich**

Aurobindo and Gandhi were great leaders of the twentieth century. Their lives were parallel in certain respects, for they were both educated in the West, and both became leaders in India's nationalist movement. In addition, they both had deep pride in their Indian heritage, and worked to reshape it in new ways. However, although they were significant Indian leaders of the twentieth century, scholars have done very little comparative work on them.

It is not surprising that not much comparative work has been done, for they were very different men. To begin, Aurobindo was deeply shaped by the Upanishadic teaching of the non-duality of reality. In turn, Gandhi's prime category was "truth," and his notion of truth was not especially informed by either Eastern or Western notions, it was broad and open. Both men wanted to change the world, but Aurobindo by bringing higher states of consciousness upon the earth, and Gandhi through activism and political involvement. Both had lofty ideals for the human being. Aurobindo's ideal was the integration of higher states of consciousness with bodily life, and Gandhi's ideal that of the *satyagrahi* who tenaciously and non-violently seeks the truth. Aurobindo spent nearly two decades in isolation, whereas Gandhi was, for decades, the main leader of a major political movement.

In spite of these differences, if one looks solely at their early years as nationalists, there were many similarities. First, both strongly felt that the Indian

National Congress needed to expand its membership to include the common people, and that it had to take a confrontational stance towards the British.¹ In particular, they supported protest in the form of *swadeshi* and boycott. Both believed indigenous languages were important for national identity, and both believed that strong villages were essential for a strong, Indian nation.² Both believed that India's national identity should be rooted in India's spiritual heritage.³ Further, they regarded that heritage in broad terms, believing that there is room in it not just for Hindus, but also for Muslims and Christians.⁴ In spite of all this, there was a key difference between them as nationalists, which this paper will explore.

A Key Difference

That there was a significant difference between Aurobindo and Gandhi, as nationalists, became especially evident in 1907. At that time, both were involved in passive resistance movements. In 1905, the British announced their plans to partition Bengal into separate provinces. Smaller provinces would be easier to govern, and would weaken the growing power of Bengal's middle class. Many Bengalis were outraged, and considered this an offence against their heritage. Thus, in 1905, *swadeshi* and boycott movements began, and in 1906, Aurobindo became the chief editor of the revolutionary newspaper, *Bande Mataram*.

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¹ Aurobindo Ghose, *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*, 36 volumes, (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1997–), 6: 22-23, 28-29, 49.

² Ibid., 1: 112-13, 115, 119; 7: 907-10, 1047-51.

³ Ibid., 7: 813, 1085-88.

⁴ Ibid., 6: 168-69.

In 1906, the Union of South Africa, in a chain of events unrelated to the partition of Bengal, passed the Asiatic Act. Due to indentured servitude, and the fact that so many Indians chose to remain after their term of service was over, there was a significant Indian population in South Africa. Many Indians were successful in business, and the Boers and the British felt threatened by the growing Indian population. With the stated aim of curbing illegal immigration, the Asiatic Act required Indians to register with the government. This included giving fingerprints and the possibility of being deported if found without a permit. Indians in South Africa were outraged! Gandhi traveled to England to petition to have the Asiatic Act repealed. There he also petitioned for the repeal of the partition of Bengal. Gandhi's efforts were unsuccessful, and a large number of Indians decided to boycott the registration requirement.

Aurobindo and Gandhi had two, shared fears in their respective efforts at passive resistance. The first was those Indians who would not cooperate. The second was repression from government forces. Both threats had the potential to dissolve the movements in Bengal and South Africa. Gandhi and Aurobindo had a similar approach to the first threat, but with some difference in degree. Gandhi's approach, in the first of his major campaigns of resistance against government power, was to have volunteers stand on the way to the registration offices. The volunteers were to take the names of those Indians who chose to register, in order to announce their names to the Indian community. This would have the effect of shaming them.⁵ Aurobindo went further than this, prescribing "social boycott."⁶ In addition, Aurobindo

used harsh language for those who would not cooperate with passive resistance, referring to them as "self-seeking and treacherous."⁷ Gandhi was gentler in tone, instructing picketers "not to be impolite" to Indians who registered.⁸

This difference was a matter of degree. However, there was a stark difference with regard to their handling of the second threat, that of oppressive government forces. Gandhi instructed the volunteers, in what was the first of his world famous experiments in non-violence, that "if the police abused or thrashed them, they must suffer peacefully; if the ill-treatment by the police was insufferable they should leave the place."⁹ However, Aurobindo had a different set of instructions for the protesters in Bengal. The British responded in repressive, even violent ways to the *swadeshi* and boycott movements. In response, Aurobindo wrote that "to submit to illegal or violent methods of coercion, to accept outrage and hooliganism as part of the legal procedure of the country is to be guilty of cowardice. . . . If the instruments of the executive choose to disperse our meeting by breaking the heads of those present, the right of self-defence entitles us not merely to defend our heads but to retaliate on those of the head-breakers."¹⁰ In addition, about seven years earlier, in his unpublished essay, "Notes on the Mahabharata," he wrote, "The Christian & Buddhist doctrine of turning the other cheek. . . . is a gospel for cowards & weaklings."¹¹

The Formation of Aurobindo's Ideas¹²

The issue of violence was a significant difference between two men, who in other ways,

⁵ M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, trans. Valji Govindji Desai, rev. 2nd ed. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1905), 125-26.

⁶ Ghose, *Complete Works*, 6: 292.

⁷ Ibid., 6: 291.

⁸ Gandhi, *Satyagraha*, 125.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ghose, *Complete Works*, 6: 294.

¹¹ Ibid., 1: 336.

overlapped in their nationalistic stances. That difference is explicable in terms of their respective experiences and development as both children and young men. To begin, Aurobindo was born in 1872, the child of Krishna Dhun and Swarnalotta Ghose. Earlier, Krishna Dhun had attended medical school in Scotland, and at a time when the controversy over Darwin was raging. He thus became an atheist, and believed that raising his sons to be good Englishmen was one of the best contributions he could make to the evolutionary progress of humanity. Hence, later, Krishna Dhun left Aurobindo, at age seven, and his three older brothers, in the care of the Drewett family in England. The sons were to receive an English education and to prepare for jobs in the Indian Civil Service.

What stands out in Aurobindo's childhood, and throughout his later years, was a passionate dedication to literature. As a boy, "English poetry . . . absorbed him," and he not only read poetry but also wrote it.¹³ Percy Bysshe Shelley was his favorite. Shelley's best known lines follow, and they convey the literary world that captivated Aurobindo: "The One remains, the many change and pass; / Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly; / Life, like a dome of many-colored glass, / Stains the white radiance of Eternity."

Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* especially influenced Aurobindo. The poem is set in the East, but is a comment on the gruesomeness of the French Revolution. It tells a fictional story of an uprising against a cruel ruler, and it praises freedom and liberty. One set of lines is: "My brethren, we are free! the

plains and mountains, / The gray sea-shore, the forests and the fountains, / Are haunts of happiest dwellers ;—man and woman, / Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow / From lawless love a solace for their sorrow"¹⁴

Reading *The Revolt of Islam*, Aurobindo claimed he "had a thought that" he "would dedicate my life to a similar world-change and take part in it."¹⁵ Not long after that, a development in India affected him. A jealous British administrator transferred his father, who had risen high in the administration of the Rangpur Municipality, to a different region.¹⁶ Krishna Dhun, who was popular in Rangpur, thus grew bitter about British rule. Aurobindo's desire to participate in "World-change" thereby "canalized into the idea of the liberation of his own country."¹⁷ Further, as a student at St. Paul's School in London, he learned about the history of political revolutions in the West, and was influenced by Giuseppe Mazzini.

Returning to India in 1893, he made his first significant revolutionary move by publishing a series of articles, "New Lamps for Old," in the Mumbai newspaper, *InduPrakash*. At that time, the approach of the Indian National Congress was to petition the British for changes in governance. Taking what he had learned from the history of revolutions in the West, Aurobindo bitterly criticized this approach: "Why, these gentlemen can never have studied any history at all except that of England. . . . we know that the first step of that fortunate country [France] towards progress was not through any decent and orderly expansion, but through a purification by

¹² The biographical information in this section is taken from Peter Heehs, *The Lives of Sri Aurobindo*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

¹³ Heehs, *Lives*, 14.

¹⁴ Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Revolt of Islam* in *Shelley's Poems*, vol. 2, *Longer Poems, Plays & Translations* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1907), 70.

¹⁵ Aurobindo Ghose, *Evening Talks*, ed. A. B. Purani, 4th ed. rev. (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 2007), 394-95.

¹⁶ Peter Heehs, *Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7-8.

¹⁷ Ghose, *Complete Works*, 36: 32.

blood and fire. It was not a convocation of respectable citizens, but the vast and ignorant proletariat, that emerged from a prolonged and almost coeval apathy and blotted out in five terrible years the accumulated oppression of thirteen centuries.”¹⁸

Later, in 1902 and 1903, Aurobindo began to put his strong words into action. He and some others worked to organize groups in Bengal that would be ready for an armed uprising. However, there was a general lack of interest at that time, and Aurobindo grew discouraged. Later, in 1905, with the partition of Bengal, the *swadeshi* and boycott movements began. In 1906, Aurobindo assumed a national spotlight by becoming the chief editor of *BandeMataram*. In *BandeMataram*, although not necessarily encouraging violence, he warned Indians, as seen above, that they needed to be ready to respond violently when the British used violence.

The Formation of Gandhi's Ideas

Gandhi and Aurobindo were born close in time to each other, Gandhi in 1869 and Aurobindo in 1872. However, Aurobindo developed an interest in revolution around age eleven, and Gandhi around age thirty-eight, in conjunction with disappointments with both the United Kingdom and the Union of South Africa. By the time he was interested in home rule, Gandhi was shaped by particular moral concerns. To begin, he had strong examples of morality and self-discipline from his parents, and reported about his childhood that he did “not remember having ever told a lie.”¹⁹ Regarding his adolescence, he reported

that “I very jealously guarded my character. The least little blemish drew tears from my eyes.”²⁰

Later, Gandhi chose to study law in England. His mother was deeply concerned about the lifestyle that he might lead there. She had a Jain monk administer to him a vow that he would “not touch wine, woman and meat.”²¹ It was very difficult, at that time, to be a vegetarian in England, so Gandhi underwent a lot of sacrifice. For instance, in the long journey to England he ate primarily fruits and sweets from India, and later, in England, he initially “starved at lunch and dinner.”²² Gandhi was thus faithful to his vow. However, he was not faithful directly out of any religious concerns, for he reported that he had become, while in India, doubtful about God’s existence.²³ Rather, he was faithful due to moral concerns. He had taken a vow, and he was determined to keep it.²⁴

Gandhi was initially faithful to the vow out of a concern with faithfulness, and this resulted in important changes. To begin, the struggles to remain vegetarian, especially in light of pressure from a friend, led him to have faith in God: “Daily I would pray for God’s protection and get it. Not that I had any idea of God. It was faith that was at work.” This was a “faith of which the seed had been sown” in his childhood by his nurse, who had taught him to recite the name of Rama as a protection against ghosts.²⁵ Also, he started to associate with English vegetarians, and encountered vegetarianism that was motivated by humanitarian and non-violent ideals.²⁶ His vegetarianism thus came to be more than

¹⁸ Ghose, *Complete Works, Ibid.*, 6: 28-29.

¹⁹ Mohandas K. Gandhi, *Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (New York: Dover, 1983), 4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 35.

²² *Ibid.*, 41.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28, 42.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 43-44; James D. Hunt, *Gandhi in London* (New Delhi: Promilla, 2012), 19-20.

something his mother had chosen for him, but his own choice: "I had all along abstained from meat . . . , but had wished . . . that every Indian should be a meat-eater, . . . The choice was now made in favour of vegetarianism."²⁷

Although Gandhi came to have faith in God, nevertheless he had "no idea of God."²⁸ However, through discussions with many people in England, including both Christians and Theosophists, he came to formulate his basic ideas about religion. Through Christians, he was exposed to Jesus' stringent moral teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. The Theosophists exposed him to Krishna's message of detachment in the *Bhagavad Gita* and the Buddha's life of renunciation. Encountering similar moral messages from differing religions, Gandhi concluded that "renunciation was the highest form of religion."²⁹

In 1891, having finished his legal training at the Inns of Court in London, Gandhi returned to India. In 1893, having tried, unsatisfactorily, to establish himself in the law profession in India, he took a job offered by a Muslim firm in South Africa. There, he continued to have conversations with both Christians and Theosophists, nurturing his growing interest in religion.³⁰ Early in his stay in South Africa, in 1894, he read *The Kingdom of God is within You*, by the well-known pacifist, Leo Tolstoy. Therein Tolstoy critiqued Western history, arguing that although the West claims to be Christian, that it had lost touch with Jesus' teachings. Tolstoy believed that one of Jesus' core teachings is that violence is wrong, and that one should not strike back against the aggressor. Jesus carried out that teaching by not

striking back against those who crucified him.³¹ Gandhi reported that the book "overwhelmed" him and that it exhibits "independent thinking, profound morality," and "truthfulness."³²

In 1893, Gandhi arrived in South Africa, and in 1894, he was reading Tolstoy. In South Africa, Gandhi had his first spurs towards activism, for he experienced indignities that he had not experienced in England or India, such as being forcibly removed from a train because he would not vacate his first class seat. His first acts of activism were to organize resistance to a bill that the Legislature was considering that would deprive Indians of "their right to elect members of the Natal Legislative Assembly."³³ In conjunction with this, he and others founded the Natal Indian Congress, based on the model of the Indian National Congress. Later, by the time he engaged in more direct resistance to the government, he had a particular moral concern, notably nonviolence.

Conclusion

Aurobindo and Gandhi were two great nationalists. Aurobindo's nationalistic interests developed early in his life, in conjunction with reading Romantic poetry, the abuse his father suffered, and studying the history of European revolutions. In contrast, nationalistic interests came much later in Gandhi's life than in Aurobindo's. By the time he became interested, non-violence was one of his concerns. Further, whereas Aurobindo gained some of his ideas from his studies of European history, Gandhi read Tolstoy, who was a critic of that history.³⁴

²⁷ Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 43.

²⁸ Ibid., 42.

²⁹ Ibid., 60.

³⁰ Ibid., 231.

³¹ Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is within You*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Cassell Publishing, 1894), 6-7.

³² Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 120.

³³ Ibid., 121.

³⁴ Shelley was a pacifist too, and *The Revolt of Islam*, which initially inspired Aurobindo, was an allegorical comment on the atrocities of the French Revolution. However, that aspect of Shelley's thought did not impact Aurobindo.

One of Aurobindo's key points was that if Indians were not prepared to become violent, then passive resistance would be meaningless: "Passive resistance cannot build up a strong and great nation unless it is masculine, bold and ardent in its spirit and ready at any moment and at the slightest notice to supplement itself with active resistance. We do not want to develop a nation of women who know only how to suffer and not how to strike."³⁵ Gandhi's counterpoint was that if Indians resorted to violence then India would become like the Western nations. That would hardly constitute freedom from the West. Speaking generally to those in support of violence he wrote, "You would make India English, and, when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englistan. This is not the Swaraj that I want."³⁶

Although there were clear differences between Gandhi and Aurobindo, the differences were not, at least at that point in time, absolute. For instance, although criticizing the Western nations for their violence, Gandhi actively supported the British in the Second Boer War, the Zulu Rebellion, and World War I.³⁷ Likewise, although Aurobindo took his initial lessons in revolution from the West, he agreed that the Western nations are barbaric, and did not want Indians to imitate the West. He felt that the *Mahabharata* offered a much more humane set of ideals, in terms of warfare, than the West.³⁸

Before ending, it is important to address two common but erroneous ideas about Aurobindo. The

first is that he was a terrorist. His younger brother, Barin, was convicted in the famous Muzzafarpur Bombing, but Aurobindo was acquitted. In a 1940 conversation with disciples, Aurobindo clarified his position: "It was never my idea that by throwing a few bombs we could overthrow the British Government."³⁹ Rather, as he stated earlier, his "idea was for an open armed revolution in the whole of India. What they did at that time was very childish—things like beating magistrates and so on. Later it turned into terrorism and dacoities, which were not at all my idea or intention."⁴⁰

The other common fallacy is that he changed his views on violence. It is true that he fled to Pondicherry in 1910 and spent the remaining four decades of his life in meditation and spiritual writing. However, he explained that he wanted to focus entirely on his new, spiritual experiences, and that he was confident that domestic and international developments would assure the independence of India. In fact, he felt that "there would be no need of armed insurrection and that the secret preparation for it could be dropped without injury to the nationalist cause."⁴¹ This stance did not constitute a repudiation of violence. Rather, regarding Gandhi's *satyagraha*, he stated in 1939, "This non-violent resistance I have never been able to fathom. . . . to resist passively seems to me meaningless. And to change the opponent's heart by such passive resistance is something I don't understand."⁴²

³⁵ Ghose, *Complete Works*, 6: 296.

³⁶ M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, ed. Anthony Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 28.

³⁷ Gandhi, *Autobiography*, 188-89, 278-80, 310-11.

³⁸ Ghose, *Complete Works*, 1: 323, 335-6.

³⁹ Nirodbaran, *Talks with Sri Aurobindo* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 2001), 1: 502.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1: 39.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 36: 64.

⁴² Purani, *Evening Talks*, 637. Although Aurobindo criticized Gandhi's nonviolent movement in India, he had the highest praise, in 1910, for the movement in South Africa, writing, for instance, that "the passive resistance which we had not the courage and unselfishness to carry out in India, they have carried to the utmost in the Transvaal under far more arduous circumstances, with far less right to hope for success. Whether they win or lose in the struggle, they have contributed far more than their share to the future greatness of their country" (Ghose, *Complete Works*, 8: 348; see also *ibid.*, 7: 925).

Restructuring Education in the context of Gandhi's views and experiments and relating it to the aspirations of the new generation and society in transition*

N. Radhakrishnan**

Learned Vice Chancellor of NUEPA
Prof.N.V.Varghese, Prof.Avinash Kumar Singh,
Dr.Vedabhyas Kundu and distinguished participants,

Namaskar,

Let me at the outset congratulate the NUEPA and Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti on this historic National Discussion Meet being organized from today on a very important national concern. I would also like to express my profound gratitude for inviting me to deliver the key-note address. This National Discussion Meet assumes considerable importance as one of the curtain raiser programmes to the ensuing 150th Birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

Saa Vidya Yaa Vimuktaye

Ancient India gave us the goal of education as “Saa Vidya Yaa Vimukta Ye”—‘education is that which liberates’.

By whichever name we may describe Gandhi's views on education and his sustained strivings from his South African days to the historic Peace Mission in Noakhali followed by the heroic efforts undertaken by him in Delhi to douse the fires of communal frenzy and orgy of violence until he fell a victim to hatred, he was offering a viable alternative to what we call ‘education’ and demonstrating new praxis. Education to him is a liberating power and process for life, through life and throughout life.

How much have we learned from Gandhi?, probably very little. The many valuable insights about education he offered and extremely important experiments he designed and implemented revealing astonishing results were all ignored by both his disciples and the nation at large for a variety of reasons. As the American scholar Allen pointed out: “Educators can benefit greatly by studying his formulations of the true goal of value education as liberation: providing means for service to meet the needs of others, for liberation from all forms of servitude and domination, and for one's ethical and spiritual liberation. Gandhi presents challenging insightful formulations of basic and new education with regard to character building as the goal of education. Gandhi is a moral idealist, and his reflections on education do not emphasize intellectual development, but rather the primacy and goal of developed human beings as moral beings. In various formulations, he presents the goal of education as character building that focuses on the development of courage, strength, fearlessness, virtue, and the ability to engage in selfless work directed at moral and spiritual aims. He emphasizes the centrality of work, vocational training, and productive manual labor, the focus on real needs and simple living, the development of nonviolent relations, greater emphasis on moral development than on usual intellectual development, and a holistic approach that involves the integrated training of body, mind, and spirit.”

* Key-note address at the National Discussion Meet on ‘Gandhian Educational Ideas in Policy Perspective’ under the aegis of NUEPA and GSDS at New Delhi – 3-5 October 2017

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(i)

Gandhi's world vision and search for nonviolent alternatives

"... my whole heart went out to the millions of the children of the semi-starved villages of India, and I asked myself... 'is it possible for me to give them those lessons and the training that are being given under your system?'" Gandhi asked while addressing a Montessori school after observing the calm, self-directed orderliness of children in a Montessori school. He was highly impressed by the Montessori-type education and did not mince words to say that it was exactly the kind of education he would like to see practiced widely in India.

This little-known statement of Gandhi also came handy to those who were highly critical of Gandhi's views and practices of education to convince the nation that his own views and experiments in education were either out of date or unsuccessful, hence we should turn to new models.

An activist-theoretician that Gandhi was, his views and practices on education are to be looked at from his world vision and intense search and strivings for nonviolent alternatives.

Gandhi's views and approaches to education offer significant challenges to the existing educational practices and dominant theoretical formulations. The value of the creative alternatives Gandhi offered was unfortunately lost in the din of debates and searches for identity.

Gandhi has written extensively about education and his writings include hundreds of pages of critiques of the evils and deficiencies of British and other modern educational models and his proposals for positive alternative approaches. The little classic *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi wrote in 1908 which was promptly banned by the British for the alleged seditious views Gandhi aired in it invited massive adverse criticism also even among his close supporters.

Gandhi's search for alternatives begins

Gandhi had begun his experiments in education much before he wrote *Hind Swaraj*. His bold initiatives revealed an unusual vision of new man and new society. He emphasized the importance of education in community building as early as 1904 when he began his community work in South Africa. His innovative, often unorthodox and controversial, educational experiments invited sharp criticism while he learned from their success and failures. His many experiments and reflections finally led to his Wardha Scheme of Education, formulated at the educational conference held on October 22-23, 1937 in Wardha. This became known as the *Nai Talim* or *New Education*. Gandhi's Basic Education focuses on eight years of elementary education.

Education as an integral part of the Constructive Programmes

What many observers or critics of Gandhi failed to notice was the fact New education initiated by him is an essential component of Gandhi's famous *Constructive Programme* that presents his positive moral and spiritual vision for a new social order in independent India.

In sharp contrast to Macaulay's concept of education which prepared half-baked babus for sarkari naukari and associates of colonial order Gandhi offered a revolutionary concept of new education, *Nai Talim*. He called it *Jivanna-Sikshana* or Basic Education. He described:

This system is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the villages. Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begin to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school.... The object of Basic Education is the physical, intellectual,

and moral development of the children. Any scheme which is sound from the educational point of view and is efficiently managed is bound to sound economic. For instance, we can teach our children to make clay toys that are to be destroyed afterwards. That too will develop their intellect. But it will neglect a very important moral principal, viz, that human labour and material should never be used in wasteful or unproductive way. The emphasis laid on the principle of spending every minute of one's life usefully is the best education for citizenship and incidentally make Basic Education self-sufficient. (Gandhi 1949:62)

Gandhi viewed the fundamentals of basic education in the following manner:

1. All the education to be true must be self-supporting, that is to say, in the end it will pay its expenses excepting the capital which will remain intact.
2. All education must be imparted through the medium of the provincial language.
3. In this, there is no room for giving sectional religious training. Fundamental universal ethics will have full scope.
4. This education, whether it is confined to children or adults, male or female, will find its way to the homes of the pupils.
5. Since millions of students receiving the education will consider themselves as part of the whole of India, they must learn an inter-provincial language. This common inter-provincial language can only be Hindustani written in Nagari or Urdu script. Therefore, pupils have to master both the scripts (Gandhi 1953b: 16)

He believed that:

Manual training will serve a double purpose in a poor country like ours. It will pay for the education of our children and teach them an occupation on which they can fall back in their later life, if they choose, for earning a living. Such a system must make

our children self-reliant. Nothing will demoralize the nation so much as that we learn to despise labour. (Gandhi 1955:60)

In this scheme, the hand will handle tools as it draws or traces the writing. the eyes will read the pictures of letters and words and also will know other things in life; the ear will catch the names and meaning of things and sentences. The whole training will be natural, responsive and, therefore, the quickest and cheapest in the world.

Primacy of the mind, the heart and the skill to use one's hands

Gandhi believed that values can be instilled in a person only through a conscientious practice and in children unless it is woven in their education process it will be of no consequence. Education as practiced in the various schools and colleges funded by Gandhi since the 1920s aims at developing three aspects of the child: *the mind, the heart, and the skill to use one's hands*. The child knows with his mind, loves with his heart, and creates with his hands. Unless we provide outlets for all these three, and training in all these areas, the child has a lopsided education.

Gandhi did not want to accumulate learning as many people accumulate assets or riches-learning should not be for the purpose of being first or winning a competition, at the expense of others. Rather than being acquisitive/competitive, Gandhi wanted education to become cooperative. It should prepare the individual to be lifted into a non-exploitative social structure.

The Basic Education (or New Education- *Nai Talim*) in its essential form fosters self-sufficiency. With that aim in mind, students do their own laundry, work in the kitchen, sweep and scrub, practice gardening, weaving, pottery, and carpentry as well as learn the three R's and acquire knowledge of essential academic subjects. In summation, Basic Education is:

1. Child-centred or learner-centred;
2. Dynamic;

3. Cooperative;

4. Nonviolent; and

5. Geared towards the acquisition of self-sufficiency.

Vinoba and other Sarvodaya thinkers developed it further as follows:

1. *Nai Talim* is the integration of *Jnana* (knowledge) and *Karma* (Action) resulting in *Ananda* (Joy).

2. *Nai Talim* cannot be pursued keeping the social order of today as it is. *Nai Talim* is based on the principle of bread labour. It is a revolution in social values.

3. *Nai Talim* is the education for non-violence. It is founded on freedom and mutual cooperation. The aim is freedom from fear.

4. *Nai Talim* is based on *Swavlamban* or bodily needs, for independent critical thinking and acquiring complete knowledge and for spiritual development.

5. Education should develop social consciousness among the students, the attitudes and habits of doing work in cooperation with others.

6. The social principle of *Nai Talim* is that all human lives are to be respected equally.

7. Education should be intimately and harmoniously related to life and nature. Life without association with agriculture is incomplete.

8. The school should be organized on the model of a good family.

9. The goal of education is discipline and character; not self-indulgence but self-control.

10. *Nai Talim* is never-ending continuous process, always fresh. It varies from day-to-day, and from region to region.

11. *Nai Talim* is not meant for the elementary grades only. It is the character of every education. It's

not meant only for the villages, but for everyone at all stages of life.

12. *Nai Talim* is not an education method. It is not 'activity education'. It is a creative idea, a way of life. It is an approach. The alpha and omega of education is the quest for truth (Gandhi 1950:93).

Hind Swaraj and its importance in understanding Gandhi

Gandhi had the vision of 'a true system of education' which he had advocated in *Hind Swaraj*. He was sure that the family should be the starting point, and *Tolstoy Farm*, the historic settlement was run like a big joint family. Tolstoy Farm was one of the communities started by Gandhi in Transvaal, South Africa, in 1910. The other was *Phoenix Ashram*. These two communities became the headquarters of Gandhiji's satyagraha campaigns (non-violent resistance for justice) which he led at that time. There was a common kitchen, which was possible because those who were habitual meat eaters voluntarily gave up meat during their time there. The woman took charge and the children regularly helped them in turns. The whole community, adults and children alike, were set to work on the farm, in the vegetable gardens, and in the workshops. Everyone shared in the sanitation work, and there was carpentry and sandal making also. With all this bodily exercise and simple healthy food, the children grew well and there was very little sickness. It was the rule there that children should not be asked to do things that their teachers did not do; teachers would work with them at every kind of labour, so things went fairly well, even though it was completely a new experience for all the children. Gandhi was clear about three things: the children should live at home, they should not be separated from their parents and sent to a residential school; they should learn in their own mother tongue; they should not have any privileges which other children could not share. They live at home because 'the education that children naturally imbibe in a well ordered household is impossible to obtain in hostels'.

‘The intimate relationships of the home where’, Gandhiji believed, ‘the foundation of all social and moral education’ and that was what he regarded as of central importance. ‘I had always given the first place to culture of the heart and the building of character,’ he wrote (Gandhi 1953a: 9).

Later, when Gandhi looked back on these years, he felt that his children have been able to learn the meaning of ‘simplicity and a spirit of service’ by growing up in a home where these things the young children of today are deprived in the name of modern education.

Unfortunately, in a country like India, education becomes the first casualty with every change at the political level too much of tampering with education has been done. This explains why we have had so many education commissions during the last 70 years since independence. And it has assumed the level of a national tragedy when we painfully realize that after many years of experiments we are back to square one, re-examining the Gandhian alternatives now. Alas, that too half-heartedly!

The Rural Institutes: bold steps by the government

The establishments of Rural Institutes in 1957 was one of the major decisions of the government of India perhaps to bring Gandhian principles in the policy frame and practice of education at higher level. The Rural institutes were conceived to be a new system of education with their focus on integration of education with productive work and preparing the young to face the challenges of the country under transition through the blending of the educational resources, academic excellence, spirit of inquiry, scientific and technological advancement within manageable limits, extension and research, mostly on the Western and American pattern of Community Colleges. It was even the practice to confer the students Diplomas instead of Degrees which will distinguish the graduates from the traditional graduates.

The emphasis was on character development, skill formation and attitudinal changes, so much so a student of the three-year Diploma Course for example, had to do, besides his optional subjects and languages, compulsory courses in Art Appreciation, Story of Civilization, Extension Education and Community Development and Hindi. In addition to this, a student had to spend a minimum of three months during his three-year period of study in villages, working with the villagers; and trying to identify themselves with the villagers. As a partial fulfillment of this undergraduate course a dissertation had also to be prepared by every student. The courses were thus very tough and were highly competitive. Still what made the courses attractive and kept sustainable were the additional hours of work, the campus life, the joyful participation of the students and staff in the programs.

(ii) Education Centres as bridges and facilitators of social change

It was definitely a bold experiment in offering a modified version of the Gandhian dream of the Nai Talim at a higher level integrating Art, Science, Music, Crafts, tools of development and citizen-making with education.

The Rural Institutes started by the Government of India as part of taking higher education to the very doors of village India for a time opened new vistas of experiments in higher education and it generated considerable hope and opened up vast possibilities. *The 14 Rural Institutes situated in different parts of India, one each in the states, rekindled visions of Gandhian education slowly getting some attention. These centres raised great hopes all over India.*

Integration of Art, Music, Crafts, tools of development and citizen-making with education.

The Gandhigram Rural Institute near Madurai started under the leadership of two veterans of the Gandhian era, Dr G. Ramachandran and his wife Dr Soundaram achieved great heights as a Centre of

education for total development as Gandhi had wished. Several innovative measures taken by this couple who had the benefit of being groomed by both Gurudev Tagore and Gandhi attracted national attention and soon Gandhigram Rural Institute became a great centre of Gandhian vision of education for holistic development in practice.

A very important and attractive side of the Gandhigram experiment was the campus life. Keeping in tune with the Shantiniketan tradition of boys and girls, waking up early in the morning and going round the campus, singing choral songs in praise of the gift of nature and our duty to preserve nature at any cost as developed and successfully implemented by Tagore both in Shriniketan and Viswabharati and called *Prabhatpheri* was an experience.

On their return from the Prabhatpheri to the hostels at 5 a.m. they get themselves divided in batches. Some turn to the cleaning of toilets and bathrooms, while a substantial number would be working on cleaning the thoroughfares. A third batch would move into the kitchen to take up cooking while another batch would be at the cleaning of the vessels. There were no cooks, no cleaners, no scavengers and nobody to serve. From preparing the menu to the purchasing of groceries and accounts maintenance students managed everything under the guidance of staff-in-charge.

The spirit of service, camaraderie, friendship, sharing, self-dependence which these programs fostered was remarkable. There were plenty of scope for amusement, sports and creative expressions. Three important items stood out in his context. There was what was known as the *Aam Sabha*, the student's parliament, which used to meet once every month regularly to debate on students' problems without fear or favor. This constituted an exposure to democratic practices and training in parliamentary procedures.

As one who watched these students' parliament I was surprised to see the dignity with which the students organized their assemblies, certainly with much more sense of decorum and decency than the

way present-day assemblies and parliament are functioning.

Education for integration

Another attractive side of the campus life was the spirit of unity fostered by promoting the cultural streams of different segments of Indian society. Almost all the important festivals and occasions connected with major religious groups were organized jointly. Tagore's birth anniversary every year was an occasion for a gala get-together and Bengali dance, Rabindra Sangeet, Rangoli competitions, enactment of Tagore's plays, creative competitions, exhibition of Tagore's paintings were the highlights of the programs on that day.

There was a *Kalabhavan* which trained students in different fine arts including theatre arts and crafts. *The' Kalabhavan* became the nerve centre of highly creative programs and were managed at different periods by eminent artists and scholars like Prof. M.G. Gopalakrishnan, J.M. Dutta, artist S.P. Srinivasan, S. Ramanujam, G. Sankara Pillai, Abani Halder—all distinguished academicians and artists of repute who hailed from different parts of India. These scholars and artistes contributed greatly to the emergence of an outlook among students which truly was egalitarian, secular, democratic and definitely tolerant and understanding. The campus became a nest of singing birds and all Saturdays witnessed cultural programmes which showcased the rich cultural tapestry of India. A world-class artist and film director like Sri Adoor Gopalakrishnan who was a student of Gandhigram acknowledged his indebtedness to the kind of education that he received from Gandhigram.

Training in Conflict Management, Community Service, Relief work, and nonviolent leadership through Shanti Sena

Another pioneering aspect that attracted many visitors to Gandhigram from different parts of India and abroad was the adherence to cultural traditions and values and the manner in which they were sought to be promoted. Mention may be made here about

the Youth Organization, *the Shanti Sena* and the way Dr. Soundaram and G.Ramachandran tried to integrate this as with the main education pattern and community life in Gandhigram.

The idea of Shanti Sena, first mooted by Gandhi in order to develop a body of unarmed soldiers of peace who would rise above any kind of parochial or caste or religious considerations, would even be willing to risk their lives to preserve life and property and would strive to promote communal harmony, amity and peace in society during crisis and who would work like a task force and undertake service programs on a regular basis, did not receive much attention for quite some time. Vinoba Bhave, the spiritual heir of the Mahatma and walking-saint who collected several thousand acres of land and distributed them to the landless and the poor in this country and who launched the revolutionary programs of *Gramdan*, *Jivan-dan* and *sampath-dan* took up the idea of *Shanti Sena* and organized units during his *Bhoodan* *padayatra*.

Gandhigram took up the *Shanti Sena* program in big way and made earnest efforts to develop a comprehensive youth training program in nonviolence and conflict resolution. G.Ramachandran himself initially took care of this program and extended his full support to make this a very attractive program so much so for a number of years the *Shanti Sena* training program remained one of the most important attractive programs of Gandhigram. GR would say often that Shanti Sena was his first love and verily it was so.

The Shanti Sena did excellent relief work under the leadership of Dr.Soundram in the sixties during the Rameswaram floods and the Ramanathapuram communal clashes. In keeping the surrounding villages clean and in the literacy drive before the Adult education programs were launched the Shanti Sena did commendable work. Sri V.M. Chandrasekhar and S.N.Subba Rao remarkable organizers of Shanti Sena made this body of students an accomplished team of peace activists and social workers.

Perhaps I have a partiality for the Shanti Sena program because from the day one I joined the Gandhigram Rural Institute in 1968, Dr GR asked me to assist Sri Chandrasekhar as Deputy chief organizer and it was the beginning of a new chapter in my life. My association with the Shanti Sena during the next 21 years in Gandhigram and another ten years in Delhi offered me opportunities to fully understand the infinite potential and scope of this program if the program is comprehended and implemented correctly.

The training programs we organized in different parts of India and abroad, the bold initiatives of involving the students in conflict resolution activities during and after bloody communal clashes in Kanyakumari, Theni, Uthamapalayam, Dhamapuri, Villupuram (all in Tamilnadu) Punjab, Assam, Mizoram, Jammu and Kashmir, Meerut and in Delhi have demonstrated the firm belief of Gandhi and his disciple Dr G.Ramachandran that the youth trained in the marvel of nonviolence could play very effective role as peace promoters.

Every visitor to Gandhigram found in the Shanti Sena not only immense hope but they insisted on the experiment being duplicated. Chairman of Indian Association for Universities said after his visit to GRI in 1986 that he would persuade the UGC to recommend introduction of ShantiSena in all the Universities.

Security personnel in Gandhicaps

The importance Gandhigram attached to the Shanti Sena could be illustrated here from one example. The Shanti Sena volunteers used to be in-charge of the watch and ward duty and management of crowd and taking care of discipline during the visit of even the President or the Prime Minister of the country to the campus in those days. During the visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957 the security persons suggested that the PM security would be their responsibility and students would not be involved in this. G. Ramachandran insisted on the Shanti Sena as usual taking care of the watch and ward duty of the

campus and he said that no uniformed policemen would be allowed in the campus. The protocol and the security people found this unacceptable and there was an impasse and the matter reached the PM and he ordered that the tradition of the Gandhigram Complex be maintained and their practice of not allowing policemen in uniform be strictly adhered to and no violation of this be allowed. Hence as a face-saving and practical step, plainclothes policemen wearing the Gandhicaps and the white dress of the Shanti Sena volunteers were allowed to be present in strength and be stationed wherever they thought they should be stationed. The tradition continued until the 80's.

On another occasion during the India-China clashes the Government of India made N.C.C. compulsory in educational institutions and the Gandhigram Rural Institute also received a circular in this regard. G.Ramachandran replied to the Ministry that Gandhigram stood for Gandhian values and hence Gandhigram Rural Institute would not be in a position to implement the government instruction to replace the Shanti Sena with the N.C.C. There was a prompt reply from the Secretary to the Government that those institutions which failed to implement the order would forfeit all government financial aid. G.Ramachandran was not a person who could be brow-beaten. He replied that he would gladly close down the Gandhigram Rural Institute than introducing military or paramilitary training in Gandhigram. The matter reached the Prime Minister who again ruled that Gandhigram should be left alone.

The disappearance of Rural Institutes in other parts of India and GRI's survival

By the mid seventies the Rural Institutes which were started with great fanfare and expectations in different parts of India were facing crisis due to a number of reasons, the chief among them being the fall in student enrolment and the other related to the apparent failure of the experiment in the present form. The students who were studying in these institutes

were clamoring for degrees instead of diplomas which the National Council for Rural Higher Education to which these fourteen institutes in different parts of India were affiliated to was offering. Secondly, under the agreement governing the Rural Institutes fifty per cent of their total expenditure would come from the Central Government while the remaining fifty would be met by the state government or the agencies which were running these Rural Institutes. Several state governments did not care to honor this clause while many institutes did not have the resources to meet even their share of the twenty five percent. Thus the Rural Institutes found themselves to be second class, neglected and uncared-for-centres of learning. The matter was taken up at the highest level and these institutes were advised either to affiliate themselves with the nearest Universities or to the State Agricultural Universities.

Gandhigram Rural Institute was also given this option. Here came in the redoubtable Dr G.Ramachandran. He stuck to his guns and refused to toe the line suggested by the government. He pointed out that it would not be possible for the GRI to compromise on its ideals after having been party to an experiment for over 20 years. The Institute has developed many models and it could not abandon its social commitment to the surrounding forty villages where it was doing extension work and integrated rural development. Hence he suggested to the government to accord the status of a University to GRI. Nobody in the higher echelons were prepared to give any serious consideration to this apparently 'outrageous' suggestion initially. By that time all the other thirteen Rural Institutes had disappeared and surrendered their special identity. GRI was also promptly advised by all concerned to affiliate itself with the nearest University..

And finally when on August 7, 1976 the Government granted the status of University to the Gandhigram Rural Institute it proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the vision of a leader and uncompromising adherence to what one considers

dear would never fail. Thus the GRI became eligible for 100 percent financial support on par with some of the Central Universities and Institutes of Science and Technologies.

Traditional Universities turn to Gandhigram experience

Thanks to Gandhigram Rural Institute's experience several universities became convinced that a definite emphasis on extension, research and integrated rural development, hitherto ignored by many universities in the country became the core area of concentration in their focus and syllabus.

The assessment pattern was fifty per cent internal and fifty per cent external with village placement and submission of dissertation on the basis of a field study was made obligatory. The fifty per cent internal marks, a revolutionary step at that time, was based on the integrity of the teacher and the continuous assessment of the students on the basis of their day-to-day performance. The idea was to eliminate what G.Ramachandran would always say "the policeman's examination" and awarding marks on the basis of one or two terminal examinations.

The courses were fully semesterised —again a revolutionary step in the 70s when hardly any Indian University was willing to take up such a step.

Gandhigram Rural Institute emerges as a Global Centre of Gandhian education in practice

The Gandhigram Rural Institute with its sixty years of experience now has the potential to emerge as the Global Centre of Gandhian Education and Sustainable Development. In this great effort Science, Technology, Literature, Arts and Crafts, Spirituality etc. could become dependable allies in improving the quality of life in several hundred villages around GRI and thus providing a model University for the whole world.

(iii)

Lessons from Gandhi's experiments in education

Before we discuss this further we have to ask ourselves: how is education viewed and treated today : a commercial activity or as a process to enable children and teenagers or adults acquire knowledge and skills required in their life? A seeming contradiction of ideas and a lurking selfish motive is discernible in the present system. As a nation, have we since the last 70 years taken a national view on our education? Cosmetic changes, yes. Have we fully shown our desire to throw away the British System which they themselves have revised suitably and admirably in their country? We have forgotten the simple truth that those nation which are dominating today in various fields, began their march towards modernization and progress by restructuring their education system suitably.

Education, according to Gandhi should become a tool, a mighty adventure of nation building and shaping the character of younger generation.

It is a fact this nation did not take Nai-Talim of Gandhi seriously due to several factors. Vinoba Bhave, a great revolutionary-thinker and activist who knew the mind of the Mahatma was very candid when he said, "Nai Talim is not a system, it is a far-reaching educational idea, it is a seed- thought, like the *Brahma-vichar* which was formerly so wide spread in India and in which so many different systems of thought-advait, dvait, visisht-advait and so on-were all rooted."

It is over one hundred years since Gandhi began experimenting his ideas on education. Both the admirers and detractors of Gandhi seem to have ignored a fact about Gandhi during this period: that he continuously evolved new strategies, absorbed new ideas, gave up many as he came across new truths inviting charges that there are inconsistencies and contradictions in his stand on many issues. Gandhi would have revised many of his views had he been alive in conformity with the changes in society.

It is unthinkable for many Gandhi disciples and scholars to revise or resile from certain positions and they consider it is irreverential to criticize him. Gandhi admitted that he erred many a times and admitted that he committed Himalayan blunders.

We very often forget the fact that Centres of education by whichever name they are known and irrespective of their focus should undergo a metamorphosis into community centers of excellence which will offer opportunities to students, staff and community outside to interact and enrich on the larger issues of life as Gandhiji wanted such centres to be.

A question arises here naturally: what would be the role of institutions of learning and research under such circumstances? Are they to remain silent on the burning issues which are corroding the social, religious and political fabric of the society in whose well-being Universities and institutions of higher learning have a role to play?

Besides acting as the repository of knowledge and disseminating agency, education institutions should act like bridges between the academic world and the society.

The society around the University also should be the social laboratory of the school/university. Instead of looking at the various problems compartmentally, they should strive to look at social change from its totality and the role it can play in this crucial area is that of a dedicated facilitator. This would not be possible unless meaningful extension activities in accordance with the needs of the society are drawn up and implemented with dedication and courage of conviction.

Should not Centres of Education, research, planning, extension and out-reach activities become entwined with the lives of the people? Every pie spent should bring back new returns in terms of the rejuvenated life of the common people which alone is the ultimate aim of all education.

- Contextualise Basic Education programme
- There is an urgent need for overhauling the present system of education. It may not be possible to uproot the present system and replace it with the education based on *Nai Talim*.

- However, one must start with institutions based on these principles and provide an alternative to the present system, so that people may have an option to opt the system that suits them. It would definitely go a long way in developing a convincing attitude among society members for the so called alternative system thereby enhancing the acceptability of the society.
- There may not be uniform system of education throughout the country. However, there must be broader frame-work within which local specific individual models may be developed for the basic education.
- The broader framework to be developed should be based on Gandhian philosophy and principles of *Nai Talim*.
- Teacher training programme should be intensified with a focus on changing the mindset of the teachers and developing effective transactional skills along with.
- Teachers to be prepared through vibrant and living experience to function as a role model.
- Emphasis should be given to resource based learning process to ensure effective partnership between the community, parents and the school faculty including student population.
- Enterprising community through education and drawing rich experience of the community for enrichment of school programme. For this, there should be advocacy campaigns. Teachers will have to play a major role in bringing community closer to the schools, and also in the process raising funds for running the institutions.
- Education that aims at the development of Head, Hand and Heart should form the basis for chalking out the objectives, strategies, curriculum etc.
- It would be the responsibility of those devoted and committed to Gandhian philosophy and

having faith in principles of Nai Talim to run and popularize such type of institutions so that slowly they may take over those run on present philosophy.

- Central and state governments both should be persuaded to come forward for funding such type of institutions. Government should help to build model schools as role models of experiments to draw their experiences in the field.
- Most important, Gandhi's reflections on peace education should serve as a challenge and a catalyst for rethinking dominant positions and have more value for significant philosophical reflection than most mainstream "academic" philosophy.
- The University Grants Commission and the Human Resources Development Ministry expect the Universities to become the harbingers and promoters of social change laboratories by reconstructing and refocusing their programs to meet the challenges by adopting revolutionary methods
- Schools, Colleges and Universities are no longer the sole repositories or centers of learning. Commercialization of education and mushrooming of educational institutions, have added a new dimension. Spread of liberal education and compulsory state-sponsored education, while have been found to be useful in the general context, a certain kind of gulf seems to be developing between the schools directly under state and those run by private institutions. A large number of schools have become "Information Pumping Centers" (IPC) rather than centers which shape the character of children.

Gandhi who admired the Montessori system was conscious of societal values and class room objectives of education. His constant endeavors to facilitate children's emergence as autonomous spiritual beings and not as robots of elder's fancy have opened of late new discussions. His advocacy to free the child

from the tyranny of text books and make learning an enjoyable process has now many takers. The demand for a shift from the teacher-centred- text book-centred- student centred- examination-centred education pyramid is becoming louder and louder.

With Gandhi the role of the five stakeholders and promoters of what is perceived as education namely, child—family—school—teachers and society has acquired a new meaning in the restructuring of education to suit the demands and challenges of a fast-changing generation who defies all traditional notions.

We may also learn from what is happening around us and in different parts of the world. Very meaningful and highly creative experiments in education right from kindergarten right upto the University level are being carried out to link the principal stakeholders of what we consider education. It has to be both liberating and value creating in every sense of the term as the Soka Education system under the Soka Gakkai led by Dr Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai International are doing in different parts of the world through their network of Soka educational institutions.

What is required under the emerging scenario is patience to listen while formulating policy perspectives. Perhaps the caution Montessori issued "the erroneous belief has persisted that it is the duty of the adult to fashion the child according to the pattern acquired by society" has to be kept as a valid guideline.

Abstract

One of the serious efforts launched by the Government of India in the post independence period was the launching of Rural Institutes in order to take the Gandhian vision of higher education to the very "doors of rural India". Integrating education, work and rural development in the cultural matrix of changing India was the avowed focus of this new experiment which raised high hopes all around. It was in fact a creative adaptation of the **Nai-Talim** of the

Mahatma, weaving in to it scientific and technological inputs in the total frame of the vision of education through learning for life and throughout life and create a new generation of inspired and qualified and committed youth who will be in the vanguard of a new India in the making. Self-confident youth, nurtured in the cultural traditions of the nation and who will be agents of social change in the Indian Tradition will lead India under transition to a nonviolent India of Gandhi's dream.

The Rural Institutes raised hopes of a revolution in the educational firmament of India and the 14 Rural Institutes soon became the bedrock of Gandhian educational ideas in practice. But, for several reasons gradually these Institutes either disappeared one by one or got affiliated with the nearest universities. Deep in the Southern India near Madurai, a Gandhi disciple Dr.G.Ramachandran took courage to stand up and the Gandhigram Rural Institute which is a Deemed to be University today offers very interesting example of what an educational centre nurtured in the Gandhian tradition could offer to rural development, employment generation, value creation, health and sanitation, women empowerment and many other elements from the Gandhian kit of revolution. We have a new generation of learners today and higher education centers should become the social, economic, scientific and civilizational barometers, facilitating and signifying the changing contours of a vibrant nation. Integration of Gandhian ideals in the educational policy perspective has to be on the basis of experiences of the past and an enquiry into why the Rural Institutes failed will offer valuable lessons and guidelines while the nation discusses Gandhian Educational ideas in the policy perspectives. While restructuring the Indian education, we may take a look at the Soka Education system under Dr Daisaku Ikeda, President of Soka Gakkai.

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Constituent Assembly of India

Friday, the 18th November, 1949

*Annie Mascarene**

The Constituent Assembly of India met in the Constitution Hall, New Delhi, at Ten of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Dr. Rajendra Prasad) in the Chair.

Mr. President, Sir, I deem it a privilege to speak on this occasion when the House is sitting to pass its final judgement over the Constitution. We are, Sir, on the eve of an historic occasion, when this ancient sub-continent of ours, which had been a laboratory of political experiments of nations in the world, which had been a caravanserai, where nation after nation and sultan after sultan came and went their way, is going to solemnly declare by the sovereign will of its people, a Sovereign Democratic Republic, to secure justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for all its citizens. Never in the history of the world, Sir, has a nation of such magnitude and population, with a history and tradition of non-violence, culture and sacrifice, fought and defeated the mightiest Empire in the world, with a galaxy of distinguished leadership that stands before time like beacon lights has declared its sovereign will to lay down a democratic constitution. When passion is high after the end of two world wars in history when reason and common-sense are at a discount and principles of liberty, equality and fraternity are resounding such intoxicating music in our ears, it is at this time, Sir, that we, the greatest nation in the world, have decided to frame our Constitution.

Revolutions have come into this world and constitutions have been swept away by 'the tide of emotions generated by the times, like that in Germany like that in France, like that in Russia, and like that in

China. But we are a singular race that has stood foreign domination and struggled for centuries and survived by dint of soul-stirring sacrifice without subverting the substructure that will stand before the world colossal.

With experience and wisdom of ages behind us, we have consummated a political experiment which can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome. It is not for me, Sir, to stand before this House and *sing* the glory of our achievements. Let us leave it to the judgement of posterity and to the verdict of historians. This is the first instance when heterogeneous interests, in a continent State like India have united themselves to form a homogeneous unit, in order to lay down rules and regulations that should lead us or guide us in future to live a national life. Like other nations of the world we have peculiar characteristics. We have differences of caste, community and creed, there is the question of untouchability, the emancipation of the Depressed Classes, provisions for the Tribes, for religious and linguistic minorities like Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, their safeguards and protection, then there is the existence of princes and zamindars and the question of their safeguards and protection, then the rights of women, these had to be considered and reconciled and incorporated into the Constitution. It must be said to the credit of the Drafting Committee, with its leadership of erudite scholarship in political science and constitutional law, and thanks to the amendment moved by the Honourable Members, that an honest attempt has been made successfully to incorporate these rights into the Constitution. Our

* Tranvancore State

Constitution is today ushered into the world with a declaration of Fundamental Rights, which can be traced back to the Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights, and the Bill of Rights - rights which have been secured for humanity by the political philosophers of the 18th century and incorporated into constitutions for all the world to see. Thus freedom of the individual, freedom of opinion, freedom of religion and expression, security of life, liberty and property and pursuit of happiness, have been ensured and secured to every individual in the framework of our Constitution. It is a constitution based on democracy with all the experience and wisdom of ages gone by; only I have to pass a few remarks with regard to the peculiarities of our Constitution.

The framework of our Constitution is modelled after the American Constitution, that is a federal constitution in which power is distributed between the Centre and the local governments. It is not new to us. It is based on the Swiss constitution which had been adopted by America, followed by Australia and Canada and today tried and adopted by the greatest democratic nation in the world. But the similarity ends there. Our Constitution that has got the shape of the American constitution differs from it in regard to the executive powers of the President. Unlike the American President we have our own President advised by a Council of Minister with cabinet rank, parliamentary responsibility and ministerial obligations, so much so our Constitution is a composite constitution with the rigidity of a written constitution but with the conventional adjustments of the British Constitution. Side by side with rigidity we have also incorporated the separation of powers which is as rigid as it is in any other constitution based on democratic principles. Our judiciary with its original and appellate jurisdiction and with the right of interpretation of the constitution differs from that of America, where the judiciary has the right of judicial review of executive and legislative activities.

Many an imperfection has been ascribed to our Constitution by some of my learned friends. They say that it falls short of our ideals and principles. May

I invite their attention to the constitutions that had been framed hitherto by democratic countries in the world? Look at the American constitution. Look at the time it took to frame it in its final shape. Had it not to undergo a series of changes and then take its final shape after the Declaration of Independence, eleven years after the Declaration of Independence at the Convention of Philadelphia? Had not the constitution of Canada to go through so many changes before it was finally settled at the Quebec Convention? And since then has it not been undergoing changes till today? Look at the Constitution of Australia. Had it not to go through many changes and wait till the Convention at Sydney? It had to be shaped and reshaped, modeled and remodeled in the cauldron of public opinion at Sydney? There was the Constitution of South Africa, a constitution meant only for the White race discrimination against the natives. Even that constitution had to wait till 1943 to take its final shape. If you have a cursory glance at the constitutions of other democratic countries before us, you will find that France started its constitution with the storming of the Bastille and it had to wait for 100 years before it could frame its constitution, meanwhile it swung between dictatorship and republicanism. Is there any other nation in the world today which deliberately elected a Constituent Assembly, which sat for three years continuously and framed its constitution? May I invite the attention of my honourable friends to the fact that we have evolved a model constitution based on democracy and that constitution will stand the stress and strain of times like the American constitution till it proves to the world that a continental country like India can have a democratic constitution and work it too to the glory of all the world.

I come now to the next point, that we have too much of centralization which ignores the powers of the States. We are at the advent of democracy. Democracy has got a tendency to let loose fickle emotions and disruptive forces. In the circumstances without a strong Centre I do not think we can have

successful democracy. We are at the beginning of nation-building. We have to survive as a nation. The question is the survival of a nation in a world of international conflicts. If that is so, we have to decide it favour of a strong Centre. If a party is to have a leader, should not the nation have a strong central government? America decided to have a strong central government. Canada decided to have a strong central government. Mr. Mac Donald, the leader of the constitution, said that all the centrifugal forces should be controlled and therefore a strong centre was necessary. If at the beginning of a state a nation faced with so many political, economic and social problems there should be a strong Centre, so that power could radiate through all the parts. The Centre should not be so strong as to kill the autonomy of the local

governments. But we have not got any such power concentrated in the Centre to kill the autonomy in the States. Therefore, this allegation that the Constitution is more centralised has no foundation. Of course, articles like 365, 371, and 324 look dictatorial, but when you look at the gust of emotions and the centrifugal forces set adrift by the advent of democracy, you will find that for the of political welfare and security of law and order, there must be a strong centre, so that the nation can survive. There are provisions in the Constituion to amend kit and if the Centre is too strong we need not fear because when the nation has attained full stature and we can stand on our own legs, we can amend the Constitution and distribute powers equally.

To Torch the Soul of Ireland, Part 1:

Commonalities between India and Ireland

P.K. Willey¹

Introduction

This discussion seeks to enhance a louder awareness of what is already quietly known. Human civilization as a whole is on a pathless-path of global dimensions that is without a plan for the good of people. We are seemingly enmeshed in an unstoppable ‘profit-frenzy’ that disregards culture, tribe, clan, family, community, nationhood, environment, babies and bird songs, and is itself without a song of striving for excellence in human self-culture. What is our duty? We must think, and see the broader picture before us, and hasten towards passing an awareness of our ethical human potentials on to the severely impacted generations of youth around us. Gandhiji serves as a compass in this discussion, his life was a sincere effort to place himself in harmony, into congruency with all life through the Earth ethics he employed.

The United States of America figures into this discussion due to an international perception of Her stature as a nation of world-wide influence, individual freedom, wealth, industrial, technological, and military power, with corporations defining and educating for a new ‘global culture.’ American people are from a globally sourced population, a unique context in the

world of nations where most people are known by their genotype. In its ideal, it is a place where people set aside individual differences, socio-cultural, and religious ideologies, to embrace a life united together under the principles of the US Constitution, with this Constitutional ‘leavening’ creating a unified understanding in Her people, a unique Nation Soul.

This researcher’s journey into realizing the profound relevance of Ireland to this discussion began with an introduction to Terence MacSwiney’s (March 28, 1879–October 25, 1920) book *Principles of Freedom*, published posthumously in 1921. In his preface (bear in mind that by ‘community’ he means the whole of Ireland), MacSwiney states:

“In Ireland there is no religious dissension, but there is religious sincerity. English politicians, to serve the end of dividing Ireland, have worked on the religious feelings of the North, suggesting the danger of Catholic ascendancy. There is not now, and there never was, any such danger...[] The present day cleavage is an unnatural thing, created by Ireland’s enemies to hold her in subjection, and will disappear entirely with political Freedom....[that the majority of dissenters in the Hiberian²

¹ Authors Note: The author is grateful for the opportunity to reflect and bring to discussion the grave issues facing our civilization, particularly for the encouragement of Dr. Jeypragasam, IGNIP and CESEI, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India. Dr. P.K. Willey obtained her Ph.D, from the University of Connecticut, USA, and is an independent researcher and Gandhian scholar. This discussion has been enhanced with input from Ireland’s daughter—Niam Gallagher. Dr. Willey’s writings can be found at www.earthethics.org.

² The Ancient Order of Hiberians (AOH), a fraternal organization was founded in the US in 1836. Along with other societies, AOH “was born of a need in the mid-fifteen hundreds to protect the welfare of fellow Irish Catholics, and especially the clergy who risked immediate death to keep the Catholic Faith alive in occupied Ireland after the Penal Laws of 1691.” Source: www.aoh.com Accessed on November 11, 2017.

Movement later joined the Republican Movement] This demonstrates clearly that anything in the nature of a sectarian movement is essentially repugnant to the Irish people...[that MacSwiney decided to include his article on Hibernianism in *The Principles of Freedom*]...I was inclined to suppress it, but decided that it ought to be included because it bears directly on the evil of materialism in religious bodies, which is a matter of grave concern to every religious community in the world.”³

That Ireland had such a profound way of being, what MacSwiney and Gandhi termed religiosity, with qualities of synthesis and absorption, needed further discovering. In this process an Ireland whose precious offering to the global community was revealed, Her tragedies and agonies bespeak a message to us all, a message of our abiding, collective, *humane* conscience. Terence MacSwiney’s ultimate dedication of himself to Her cause of justice unveiled the depth of that religiosity, he was to die holding onto a civilizational ideal through *the Fast*.

The question arose, what were or are the moral underpinnings of the Celtic⁴ civilization found in Ireland? How did they support the use of the Fast? Were they similar to India, the only other nation recognized to have historically used the Fast with any degree of success? Is there something here that could help humanity remember itself and its own potentials in the damaging daze that threatens to overcome us? In answer, a look at India, Ireland⁵ and Her ancient Celtic civilization, offers a view of a nations ethical means to promote a morally oriented civilizational ideal through the Fast.

Defining Terms.

Civilization: the sustaining impetus of the human race to continue to foster its own existence. The foundation of civilization is the family unit. Communities are made up of families, numerous communities together make up nations.

Moral: those thoughts, words, and deeds that sustain the foundations of civilization.

Morality, moral integrity: the responsibility and duty a person assumes to respond, to be true to the voice of conscience.

Moral discipline: the restraining of oneself from all actions that are harmful to others and oneself, cultivating positive qualities that are beneficial to others and oneself. The innate awareness of the necessity for a self-regulated harmony with moral laws is evidenced by a universal sense of justice. Even the constant denial of justice does not destroy an inborn knowing of our human equality and duty to one another.

Moral judgment: the perception we have of an action in light of its potential final outcome.

Immoral, Immorality: those thoughts, words and deeds which are detrimental to individuals, families, and the larger society.

Detrimental: something which causes or potentially causes individuals moral harm, by making the one so harmed disinclined to think, work, and undertake actions for positively sustaining civilization, their families, or themselves.

Earth ethics: ethics are generally understood to be some sort of *moral code*. In the discussion of ethics

³ MacSwiney, T. (1921). *Principles of Freedom*. Kennikat Press, Port Washington, NY.

⁴ Irish and Celtic refer to the same people and similar culture, and also to a linguistic group that was spoken in other parts of the UK until about 300 AD.

⁵ Each country has a name it has given itself. These names come out of the slowly evolving Soul of the Nation. In contrast to the English word, *Ireland*, the *Gaeilge* (Gaelic or Celtic) word for their country is *Éire* (for Ireland), a soft and beautiful sound.

there can be no absolute standard of morality, as it is a relative term. In this light, Earth ethics is used as an adjectival term which indicates an ethical *choice* to employ a means, or mechanism, an ethical tool that will enhance greater and deeper intrinsic experience of harmony with the wider ocean of life.

Thus, *Earth ethics* are subjectively relative in the dutiful response of each person to a particular circumstance at a given moment. Earth ethics are knowable through a sense not physical, which is called here, our *ethical instinct*, through which we can see *ethics* in action and *know* their interactive reality.

Earth Soul: The sum total of past and present ethical intentions, longings, aspirations, to abide in realms of justice and conscience, to experience respect, well being, and harmony with all life.⁶

Nation Soul: A people who identify themselves as part of a political entity, informed and made wise by the moral education of the *National mind* through media and social interactions.

How and When the Fast is Effective

The Fast is the most pronounced form of abstention, the denial of nourishment for the body's existence, as prayer, penance, purification, a moral weapon. Its primary focus is a call-out for justice to ameliorate the transgression of perceived moral law. A secondary focus complements the primary focus: purification leading to a clearer and deeper understanding of truth within oneself, whether in an individual or collective group. The Fast, as Gandhi, Chavez, Sunderlal Bahuguna, Irom Sharmilla Chanu, Medha Patkar and others have used it, has been an unceasing, *deadly-earnest prayer* with the fullest heart, and as such is a moral weapon from the arsenal of *satyagraha*, the holding-on-to-truth force.

And what is prayer? Words mumbled, or what comes out of our being or more? The Midrash of Judaism holds the expression of prayer to be heard and known in these ways: "cry, howl, groan, stricture, song, prostration, encounter, judgment, entreaty, standing, appeal and beseeching."⁷

Of prayer Gandhi said:

I believe that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and therefore prayer must be the very core of the life of man, for no man can live without religion. There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But it is like a man saying that he breathes but that he has no nose. Whether by reason, or by instinct, or by superstition, man acknowledges some sort of relationship with the divine. The rankest agnostic or atheist does acknowledge the need of a moral principle, and associates something good with its observance and something bad with its non-observance.

Prayer produces an effect on oneself, that is, it awakens further the In-dwelling Spirit and, as the latter becomes more and more awakened, the area of its influence becomes wider...Prayer is a matter of the heart. Saying it aloud and similar other activities are intended to awaken the heart. The Infinite Power which exists outside us also exists inside us and is equally infinite there. The body is no obstacle to It's operation. The obstacle is created by us. Prayers remove that obstacle.ⁱ

Gandhi used the Fast in various ways. Initially he turned to it as a self-imposed penance for morally detrimental actions done by those under his care in the Phoenix ashram school in South Africa. For him

⁶ See the work of Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, Metaphors* for his work on conflicts and schisms within groups .

⁷ As stated by Inter-faith Chaplain, Mr. Neil Gordon, a person of Judaic faith.

ⁱ The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

it was a form of sincere prayer for reformation, in himself as teacher, and for the awareness of his students as to the importance of moral law.

Later in India, on several occasions Gandhi felt an inner call to undertake the Fast. Those times were torturous events for those around him, those who cared for him, who identified with his evolving ideals, particularly for his wife, Kasturba, whom he called simply, 'Ba'. He could not undertake the Fast without support. He never knew if he would come out of some of them alive. From February 10 till March 3, 1943, at 73, he embarked upon a 21 day Fast while in detention at the Aga Khan Palace. Deeply perturbed to learn of the British authority plans to create separate electorates for the different castes and religions in India, Gandhi said he was making "...an appeal from Government to God for justice."⁸ Before starting, he stated to those with him:

I see the Fast coming. I have been outwardly engaged in different activities, but inwardly, I have been listening all the time. I have not been able to hear the inner voice clearly, but something within me tells me that I cannot get away from the Fast. After much thought I have come to the conclusion that the idea of the Fast as it came to me at Sevagram was in response to the inner voice. I have discussed the subject threadbare. I have delayed embarking on it but I see now that I cannot avoid it. I want you to prepare yourself mentally for it. I had first thought of keeping the thought to myself till the actual time came but on second thoughts I felt it would be better to prepare you so that you could keep your poise and be able to work

during the Fast. I shall need looking after. I have not the stamina... I am afraid, Ba may not be able to stand the strain, although she is very brave..[] Even if all of you break down, I shall still have to go on a Fast, but it will make it harder for me. Therefore do keep yourself fit.⁹

The Fast can be called a weapon because the Fast *hurts, burns*, in the sense of creating *moral pain* in those who witness it, torching awareness to moral and ethical issues that the Fast may have forced into play, eliciting response by particular individuals. The pain that is felt may be extreme, the Fast may *sear* through comfortable acceptance, ethical sloppiness, ignorance, dull inertia or sloth, to blazon the light of *justice* and consequent individual and collective moral responsibility *to restore the individual and society into congruency* with overarching ethical laws. This acknowledgement is cleansing and purifying and leads to an ethical restoration; it brings great relief, joy, sweetness, and societal coherence through a *degree of justice* obtained. Because there is a restoration of *ethea*, the pain caused is healing, like natural childbirth.

Little research or attention has been paid to the ethical mechanisms in the human consciousness that using the Fast requires. Is it because contemporary models of scientific inquiry, severely limited to perceptions of material quantifiability appear to actively deny the reality of unseen subtleties, including moral law, and the ethics that support this law? As the Serbian-American scientist, inventor and engineer, Nikola Tesla (1856-1943)¹⁰ observed:

⁸ Goswami, K.P. (compiler) (1971). *Mahatma Gandhi: A Chronology*. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi. pg. 242

⁹ Nayar, S.(1996). *Mahatma Gandhi's Last Imprisonment: the Inside Story*. Har-Anand Publications, New Delhi.

¹⁰ Tesla faced a difficult and lonely life. Among his many discoveries, several demonstrated alternative means for sourcing free electrical energy for people everywhere. For this and more, his inventions were met with great obstruction; he was inadvertently crushing the 'profit nose' of industry that stood to make enormous profits by charging for electrical energy systems, and all that could be plugged into them. A brilliant mind, he was unconcerned with the 'profit-motive' for living life.

“The day science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence.”

The use of the Fast appears to be experientially *universal* in human history and civilization. We see children employing non-cooperation, refusing food, parted lovers and upset Mothers refusing to eat. Appeal to reason and conscience through the Fast in one way or another is endemic to the human race. The Fast is distinctive in that it can be picked up by our own choice, in the personal use of our liberty to address an unseen awareness present in all; in its most pronounced form, appealing with our *utmost* effort to evoke change.¹¹

Few countries have that high level of respect and support for individual freedom that enables power to respond sensitively to the use of personal liberty in the form of moral protest through the Fast. In most nations, and even in those where the Fast was respected at one time or another, the Fast is often ineffective. There appears to be an inverse correlation between the military power of a state and degree of private profits in industrial ‘development’, to an ability to ‘hear’ the call of the Fast.

That many others have righteously used the Fast and results have seemed ineffective, appears to have much to do with specific social markers that make the call of the Fast by a specific individual effective or not. Gandhi’s use of the Fast was effective due to the fact that 1) the socio-cultural and political environment of South Asia had grown to include a degree of respect for the decision to Fast; 2) Gandhi’s

education and activism as lawyer enabled him to adroitly articulate and address the political nuances and processes of his day; 3) Gandhi came from the elite upper classes, was politically active and popularly noticed. There were coteries of elite wealthy people, as well as family around Gandhi who valued his life or at least the influence he welded; the lives of the rich and famous, their doings reported extensively by media thus also helped in spreading awareness of Gandhi; 4) public scrutiny gave Gandhi high marks in sincerity, love for humanity, a thirst for justice and truth: these ethical qualities inspired public faith in Gandhi’s ability to seek justice for all and endeared him to the masses. What happened to Gandhi’s person mattered to millions who had not met him, for they could feel the moral imperative of his ideals in his call for justice.¹²

Through his Fast on several occasions Gandhi was able to call out to the conscience of the multitudes and receive their cooperation. His last Fast appealing for communal unity (Jan 12-18, 1948) succeeded in piercing through the political insanity of Muslim-Hindu migration between India and Pakistan, and drew hearts together in what became the crazy dance of his last year of life – the dance between power that no longer had any use for him, that had little concern for the starving masses; and the masses themselves, that had taken to his ideals with their whole heart and expected those who had had the privilege of association with him to be concerned for their best interests.

Has modern India jettisoned the great ethical mooring in her Nation Soul? What is the relationship between the rise of India’s ‘consumer classes’, technical

¹¹ Research done through the HeartMath Institute see: www.heartmath.org has found that the heart, also referred to as the intuitive conscience, is the center of the human being, and is the means through which a global harmony or coherence can be reached.

¹² It should be noted that Gandhiji felt that only Vinoba Bhave could offer the Fast on a national level. To understand why, the popularity and effectiveness of Vinoba’s work and the ways that it served social justice needs examination, as well as his status as a brahmin fixed-caste bearer and the socio-cultural consequences of that perception. Through association with Gandhi several individuals garnered social prestige and became leaders in the public eye, some, not Vinoba, assumed the reigns of national power at the time of Indian Independence

and industrial build-up and the distraction of the minds of her people to the awareness – or not – of the moral imperative of the Fast? Is there a way that we can ‘have our cake’ and ‘eat it too’?

Clarifying the Ideal of Patriotism

There is a saying in India that all human beings have five mothers. The 1st is our Mother whose body gave us our physical body and so much more; 2nd, Mother Nature, the glorious creation that sustains our body with the airs, waters, soils, the fruits of the region we live in; 3rd, our Mother Land, who teaches us about the Earth and the ethea of the people of our community and country; 4th, the Mother Book, the scriptures or pure ideals that inspire us into philosophical expansion through ethical life and inquiry; and 5th, the Mother Conscience within us who steers our minds through a knowing in our hearts until our being is able to move in congruency with the great Ethical Laws that sustain our life.¹³ We are all, intensely bound in the natural relations to all our Mothers, in all life. We exist because of them, we are of them. Through pure devotion to even one of our ‘Mothers’ we can embrace the truth of *all* of them.

A patriot is one who seeks to honor and glorify his Mother land. Patriotism that is built upon honor of the Nation Soul is in harmony with the larger sphere of natural and Earth ethical relations to ideals. Such patriotism is broadening, expansive, generous, noble, and appreciative of other outlooks. A patriot stands as a representative of the highest ideals his country has to offer. He does not represent trends or fads of politico-socio-cultural awareness masquerading as popular beliefs, nor does he mistake these as being of his country or himself. He seeks to zealously guard and serve the best interests of his region as his Mother, as part of himself.

The patriot will always strive to protect and enhance the natural beauty of his nation, knowing, it is in reality, his Mother land. A nation’s character and influence, treasure, physical beauty, depend upon the sum totals of the ecological health of all its regions, and interdependence with all adjoining systems. Through the exercise of true patriotism, he is led to become a planetary citizen with a deep love of the land that watered the roots of his being. Wherever a true patriot goes, he contributes the fragrance of the ethical principles that sustain the ethos of his country. Thus a true patriot is simultaneously a true internationalist, and true global citizen. Gandhi gave this understanding of himself as a true patriot:

My religion and my patriotism derived from my religion, embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such things as crawl upon the Earth...because we claim descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form it appears must be essentially one.¹⁴

That the Nation Soul of India still retains this great ethical mooring within herself, has been most obviously demonstrated by the *people’s regard* for the ***utmost efforts*** of Sri Sunderlal Bahuguna of the Chipko Movement, and Irom Sharmilla Chanu.¹⁵

Sunderlal Bahugunaji, (b. January 9, 1927) met Gandhi when he was 13 years of age. Gandhi advised him to look into the needs of his own locality, and to work there for people through the platforms of Gandhi’s Constructive Program. Since then Sunderlalji has appealed to God and Government through the Fast at times for 45, and then for 74 consecutive days, to stop the deforestation of India’s Himalaya, working with a people’s movement known

¹³ The Author sees the 5th Mother as conscience.

¹⁴ Gandhi, M.K. (1929). *Young India*. April 1. Age 59.

¹⁵ Ishizaka, S., (2006). The Anti-Tehri Dam Movement as a New Social Movement and Gandhism. *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies*. Vol. 18: pps.76-95.

as CHIPKO. CHIPKO touched a universal moral ‘nerve’ in human consciousness when images of women chaining themselves to trees to stop their felling hit the press. CHIPKO educated hill people into awareness of the dangers and consequences of clear cutting mountain slopes for industrial profits, and the danger that the construction of dams would result in: flooding and displacement of ancient villages, their people, arable lands and forest habitats in the Himalayas. Notwithstanding numerous official government promises, the environmentally unfeasible dam structures have been created. They now perch like silent time bombs in the seismically unstable Himalaya, with towns in the Gangetic plain below them. Sunderlal Bahuguna’s noble efforts, although not respected with any genuine solution-action by the Government of India, nonetheless were honoured by the same Government, with the highest possible national civilian awards: the Padma Sri, which he returned in 1981, and the Padma Vibhushan, in 2009.

Irom Sharmilla Chanu’s (b. March 14, 1972) use of the Fast is significant, for she refused not only food but water also. The Governmental response saw her force-fed through a nasal tube for 16 years. She began her Fast on Nov. 5, 2000 as an independent voice against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) that has kept her home state of Manipur under martial law since 1958. Within a few days she was arrested for ‘attempted suicide’. Thence began a legal sham of her human rights. She was incarcerated in the Jail Hospital, and required to report on her decision to continue the Fast or not before a magistrate every two weeks. At these highly ‘secured times’ she sometimes managed to say a few words to local press before being transported back to the Jail Hospital. Once a year, she was released due to limits on how long a ‘suicide attempt’ could be held. She would continue her Fast, without food or water, and be re-arrested after 2-3 days, again as a suicide attempt and the legal charade continued.¹⁶

Her appeal to God and Government, for unty in seeking a peaceful solution that did not use military force in India’s Northeast was largely ignored by Government. A lone voice, a woman, locked up, the audibility of her voice was effectively silenced. Yet the moral torch of her Fast spread. Her stupendous, magnificent effort became known internationally with the support of Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi (Iranian Human Rights activist and attorney). Ebadi caused the Indian Government to publicly acknowledge Irom Sharmila. Meanwhile and since, Irom Sharmila continues to be recognized globally with numerous awards of appreciation. After waiting for sixteen years with the utmost patience, bearing a lonesome neglect that would have crushed anyone else after just a few months, she decided to de-train from her effort due to the lack of any effective governmental response whatsoever on August 9, 2016. Sharmila has since moved towards public awareness activism.

A successful example of a true American patriot is Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), who deeply inspired Gandhi as well. Thoreau lived during a time when rising American wealth and opportunity was turning the heads of her best thinkers towards name, fame and gain. Thoreau cherished the region of his birth, southern New England, and lived upon it as a child upon the breast of his Mother, even taking two years of seclusion from human society at Walden Pond in Massachusetts. His patriotism caused him to turn his inner attention to the informing ideal of America—liberty. He stood up against the onslaught of distortion, the creeping misrepresentation of pure ideals, and, like many today, ended up in jail.

Once there, in an almost fabled anecdote, he was visited by R.W. Emerson, another notable philosophical luminaire of the time, who was both mentor and friend. Emerson asked him, “What are you doing in here?” Thoreau replied, “What are you doing, out there?”

¹⁶ See: Kavita Joshi’s 9 minute video made six years into Irom Sharnilla’s Fast: *My Body, My Weapon*. At <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xw5vSrRkJE> and Mehotra, D.P. (2009) *Burning Bright: Irom Sharmila and the Struggle for Peace in Manipur*. Penguin Books, India.

America's Tim DeChristopher is another patriot of our present days¹⁷. Timothy Mansfield DeChristopher (b. November 18, 1981) is an American environmentalist and co-founder of the group *Peaceful Uprising*.¹⁸ In December 2008, he protested a Government agency's public auction of 116 parcels of public land in Utah. He successfully bid on 14 parcels of land (totaling 22,500 acres) for \$1.8 million with no intent to pay for them but to stop the rank exploitation and desecration of American Nature for private industrial profits. DeChristopher was removed from the auction by federal agents and taken into custody, eventually serving 21 months in prison.

"Soon, saying they had been rushed into auction with insufficient environmental and scientific review, the US Department of the Interior canceled many of the leases shortly after the auction and a subsequent court injunction."¹⁹

DeChristopher's work is significant, and the choice of numerous noble patriots world wide now, to save the face and beauty of the Motherland. True patriots all exhibit this quality.

Democratic consumer capitalism as practiced today, with its loyal markets for brand names and logos however, is increasing confusion of patriotism with capitalism through popular consumer goods (as has occurred in 'technologically advancing' societies, particularly obvious since 1920). People have become severed from the Mothers that birthed their beings. The new global 'corporate-culture' termed also as 'the monoculture' is taking over human civilization with its self-created demand for unnatural labor, jobs,

unnatural hours, and unintelligent manufactures resulting in socio-cultural and environmental destruction and polluting outputs.

The conflation of education, industry, and capitalism with the ideals of democracy and patriotism has resulted in an increasing moral and ethical confusion that has made an even more profound distortion in people's minds about what democracy means, what intelligence and success means, and what patriotism means. Democracy itself has suffered a tremendous obscuring of its ideals with unscrupulous influence peddling, "majority wins" and even "loudest voice wins" and not much more discussion. Nehru noted that by the 1800's:

English businessmen were the leaders of the new industry. They were not much interested in high democratic principles and the people's right to liberty. But they discovered that greater liberty for the people was good for business. It raised the standard of the worker, and gave them *an illusion of possessing some freedom*²⁰, and made them more efficient at their work. Popular education was also required for industrial efficiency. Businessmen and industrialists, appreciating the expediency of this, piously agreed to confer these favors on the people. In the second half of the 19th century *education of a kind* spread rapidly among the masses in England and western Europe.²¹

With the new education, the new models of how to live, and what life was for, held out to the public mind through media, the goal of life was ostensibly changed from a philosophy of holism and piety to "necessary and advantaged" physical comforts,

¹⁷ Tim DeChristopher has written a plea for public support on his site below. "Why I want You to Join Me."

¹⁸ See: www.peacefuluprising.org

¹⁹ As directly suggested by Source: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tim_DeChristopher and Maffly, Brian (April 17, 2013). "Activist Tim DeChristopher to be freed after 21 months in custody". *Salt Lake Tribune*. Retrieved 2013-04-22. Accessed on November 11, 2017.

²⁰ Author's emphasis.

²¹ Nehru, J.(2004). *Glimpses of World History*. Penguin Books, India.

increasing personal displays of consumed goods. The media held out to the masses the lifestyles and consumer goods of the extravagantly rich and therefore famous, detrimentally creating desire, envy, and covetousness in the public mind. This brought about an almost unconscious cooperation with the means to achieve the new short-sighted ideal of industry, supported by media, backed by a half-baked science, which soon stripped itself of the need for ethical oversight, and disavowed the qualms of the human heart. Once the integrated connection to the Mother land is shaken, estranged from itself, the mind fastens on to external loyalties and affiliations as being patriotism. This patriotism however, is insincere, as it cannot touch the deep connection to pure ideals, born of the fibers of integrity that hold the memories of Earth and waters within a person.

The history of Ireland, from the angle of her Nation Soul reveals a struggle to maintain a pious and humane way of being, community oriented, nurturing a unique, distinctly indigenous Irish ethos. The example of Ireland, in microcosm, is directly related to the struggle of innumerable Nation Souls across the planet to awaken to the exercise of social conscience. The unfolding of our planet's Nation Souls, is an evolutionary step in the process of the blossoming of our Earth Soul, which will result in our awareness of one another as being genuinely of one human family.

All Nation Souls share a similarity in the deep honoring of universal ethics, for they are of, and from, the same pure flower of ideal—one love, one life, as truth, one Earth. As accepted components of the Earth soul, each offers a populace that has cultivated a vision and expression of that oneness, unique to itself. This is the beauty of nations.

At this time, however, we are faced with the infinitely tragic nuclear pollution of the entire planet, by numerous aged, compromised nuclear power

plants. Of particular note is the nuclear poisoning from Japan, due to the horrific nuclear accident in Fukushima on March 11, 2011, that continues to spew into the atmosphere and oceans. Human civilization is being forced to leap-frog the work of awakening Nation Souls, into our planetary-citizen awareness of our Earth Soul. Abstaining from what does not agree with our conscience is the only course of action left open to us. All our choices and decisions, *taken locally*, need to reflect a global awareness of their causes and effects. Local action will begin the re-build of the Nation mind.

Ireland and India: Nursing Ideals for Civilizations

India and Ireland have many commonalities between them. Through centuries of moral and intellectual refinement, both areas had developed a civilization that tended towards harmonic congruency, and was inspired by ideals. The ancient system of imparting ethical and philosophical culture in India's far flung villages through wandering *Sannyasins*, or *Sannyasinis* (ascetic men and women truth seekers), is found in parallel with the travelling poets and bards of ancient Celtic Ireland, going from Kingdom to petty Kingdom with news, messages, ballads of history and heroic deeds, legends and wisdom; spreading a sense of 'we'.

The Irish civilization had been spared the psychical trauma that marred most of Europe and parts of central Asia by the conquests of the enslaving Roman Empire. Early records indicate migrations of people to Ireland from the Iberian peninsula. The people of Ireland were not imperialistically inclined, unlike the British, Scandinavian, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, earlier Greek, and Roman Empire builders. Like India, ancient Ireland was comprised of small kingdoms,²² sharing a common overall Celtic culture and language.

²² Map of Ireland circa 900 AD. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Irish_kingdoms Accessed on November 15, 2017.

“Prior to the Anglo-Norman invasions, Ireland was home to between 80-140 independent petty kingdoms called *túatha*. A person’s idea of nationhood was local to their home *túath* and kin-group (*fine*). Each *túath* had its king elected from among its noble grades, each had their own customs and traditions, styles of dress, particular songs and legends making each *túath* culturally and politically distinct in character from the next. Early Irish history is a logbook of the allegiances, battles, and triumphs of these kingdoms and the families that comprised them.”²³



Engrossed as they were in their internal affairs, neither India nor Ireland were able to unite against a common enemy that was to threaten their civilization. Both were to suffer invasions that robbed and pillaged the piously held emblems of ideals, which the people had carefully vested with jewels, gold, and silver. The

ethical cultural fabric of both seems to have suffered due to the length of time, ferocity of attack and invasion. In India, history records many invasions: the Huns, the invaders seeking riches from Islamic regions west of India, the gory deeds of conquest by Indian Rajahs, the British economic exploitation and governance. In Ireland, the more ‘recent history’ records the first assault upon their way of life, as being through the Danes (then called Vikings, Norsemen):

“There is a consensus of opinion that the first appearance of the Northmen in Ireland occurred in 785 A.D. They came at first simply for the sake of plunder. Monasteries, oratories, and shrines received their main attention. These they sacked, and plundered, and destroyed, with a vengeance, treating barbarously the monks, often starving them to death, and killing them. The following were some of their raids:—

In 795 Rathlin was raided; in 803-6 Iona, when they killed 26 monks; in 807, Innismurry and part of Roscommon; in 813, Mayo; in 820, Cork and Cape Clear; in 823, Skelig Michil, when *the hermit Etgal*²⁴ was carried off and died from hunger and thirst; in 825 Dun Lagan near Glendalough; in 826, Wexford; in 828, Louth. In 831 or 2 Turgesius comes on the scene and unites the divided forces of the Northmen, who from this forward aim at settlement and conquest.

To this date the *Ard-righ* [High King] and provincial kings were wholly inactive, having made no move to repel the pirates. Some local chiefs, it is true, protected their property as well as they could. In 812 the Northmen were defeated by the men of Mayo, but no combined action was taken. This was the result of the tribal system. The various tribes could fight bravely against one another, but they could

²³ *Brehon Law Academy*. Flanagan, K. (2017). Under the Brehon Laws: Family, Children, and the Status of Women in Early Ireland. May 21. Source: <https://www.brehonlawacademy.ie/single-post/2017/05/21/Under-the-Brehon-Laws-Family-Children-and-the-Status-of-Women-in-Early-Ireland>. Accessed October 31, 2017.

²⁴ Italics by author. To this day Etgal’s suffering is difficult to hear of.

never unite to fight a common enemy. Every petty king and chief was independent, and if there was any allegiance to an over-king it was only nominal. Some chiefs may, on a call to arms, rally round the Ard-righ, if they considered it their interest to do so, but on the eve of a battle they might, for some slight or imaginary offence order their men to withdraw from the field and thus cause incalculable injury. We must remember that at the time there was no standing army, or navy. Without a navy it was impossible to check the incursions of the barbarians.²⁵

Many Viking raiders eventually set up settlements in Ireland. They became enamored of the Celtic way of life, and settled down to eventually become absorbed in the Celtic culture and ethos.

India's great epics tie present-day life to ethics through stories of fabled righteousness in the courts of Kings, thousands of years old. Likewise, there were numerous historical epics, legends and stories, tracing Ireland's peaceful allegiance to different saints, mythical gods, and legendary kings (some of whom at different times ruled all Ireland as the High King). India's legendary ancient kings, as King Rama and King Krishna, the hero of India's epic *Itihasa*, the *Mahabharata*, and the subject of the purana, *Srimad Bhagavatam*, are traced to ancient sages, so also are the monarchies of Ireland, which find lineage to the Biblical Prophet Jeremiah, believed to have come to Ireland about 400 B.C., fleeing Egypt.

The Brehon — a Way of Life

In Ireland, there is a saying, "Irish laws, Irish ways." Similar to indigenous Indian culture, Celtic culture had received a fine tuning and honing for

millenniums, now thought to go back over 5000 years, contemporary to the life of Krishna. Like most indigenous peoples, Irish civilization has historically been devout, along Indian lines, seeing the unseen, the All-Pervading through a polytheistic interdependence and honoring the perception of a subtle relationship to all life, giving a vision of a harmonious whole. Thus social progress spared Nature.

The Sanskrit alphabet, called *Devanagari* or *Alphabet of the Gods*, according to legend and scholarly speculation, 'appeared' in Vedic India approximately 4000 years ago. The *Ogham* (pronounced OM) alphabet of ancient Ireland made a similarly sudden appearance, and is called the *Gift from the Gods*. Its structure is unique and has no parallel elsewhere. Some scholars see in the Ogham alphabet structural formations that refer to the trees, plants, and animals of Ireland.

Irish civilization progressed with innumerable humane, peaceful, cultural and social norms, and expectations, backed up by an ancient system of laws, the *Brehon*. Every three years, there was a meeting, called the Great Fair, to make the *Brehon* uniform for everyone in the land. In this respect, like the Indian *Shastras*, the revised codes for the expression of *dharma* or righteous and inborn duty for individuals, families, *varnas*²⁶ and social life, kept up with philosophical and socio-cultural changes; the Irish *Brehon* was updated for the ever-changing contexts that people were evolving to.

In ancient Ireland, the unique gifts that women bring to life, the human right to liberty regardless of gender, were thus duly recognized and honored.

"We find, for example, that in ordinary household life a woman's social status was

²⁵ O'Halloran, W. (1916). Early Irish History and Antiquities and the History of West Cork Ch.12. Source: <http://www.libraryireland.com/WestCorkHistory/DanishInvasion.php> Accessed on November 1, 2017.

²⁶ Varna – the natural ordering of people by capability and consequent occupation for societal functioning, a principle found in natural operation throughout human societies. Ideally considered the reason behind the now rigid, fixed caste system of India, the principle of varna has nothing to do with present day human ordering and statuses.

legally based on her closest male relatives – whether her father, husband or adult sons. Though this served to provide her with some legal and financial social protections, she was in turn limited in her own legal capacity; she was restricted from entering contracts independently and could only give testimony at law in certain limited circumstances.

On the flip-side, however, the *Brehon* Laws also stated that wives held the “right to be consulted on every subject”. Crucially, women could choose who they married, were never considered to be their father’s or husband’s property, owned their own wealth and retained their property in the case of divorce – which they themselves could initiate on certain grounds; and, importantly, women were not confined to the household station in life.

Women could access higher education and develop their skills and expertise to become eligible to join any of the high-grade professions, and, through their own merit and excellence, begin to increase their social status in like manner as the men. We know, for instance, that there were female druids, *brehons* [legal mediators], poets, musicians, and doctors, etc. A woman who attained a higher grade than that of her closest male kin began to operate independently within society according to her own status.²⁷

Like ancient India, there was an inherent recognition of the inescapable differing functions of individuals to the community. The socially ubiquitous awareness of *varna* groupings by individual predisposition and talents was prevalent, but, unlike India, they were not rigid, and were derived from

what people made of themselves by their skill, expertise, and inclinations.

The *Brehon* prevented exploitation of people by a thread of social justice that ran through the moral and dutiful fabric of society. It respected the rights of animals with protective covenants. Capital punishment, to take a person’s life by arbitrary judgment, was almost unheard of. Severe offenses and killings were dealt with through exile, ostracism, and the payment of ‘honor fines’ to the aggrieved victims and/or relatives.

India’s *Tragu*, Ireland’s *Troscad*

Strong differences in social statuses mean that communication between hierarchies may be difficult to hear. Piercing through blocks in communication, shaving off indifferences caused by greater social privileges, has long been a problem for the underprivileged where systems of unequal power keep people oppressed, subjected to injustice or near poverty.

Another feature of ancient Ireland, was the use of the Fast through hunger-strike, as a means for people to gain redress for injustices and unpaid debts incurred by more powerful peers. This directly corresponds to the use of *tragu* which was still going on in Gandhi’s childhood in Kathiawar, Gujarat. In deeply feudal-minded India, *Tragu* included superstitious blood-letting and blood-sprinkling by the aggrieved, after some time it could lead to the use of the Fast, and even gruesome self-immolation on the doorsteps of the defendant. In Ireland, the practice was subjected to *Brehon* regulations. One use of the Fast was known as *cealacha*—to embarrass authorities²⁸ to provoke a change. Another more serious form of the Fast was called *troscad*. *Troscad* was historically defined as:

²⁷ Brehon Law Academy. Flanagan, K. (2017). Under the Brehon Laws: Family, Children and the status of Women in Early Ireland. Source: <https://www.brehonlawacademy.ie/single-post/2017/05/21/Under-the-Brehon-Laws-Family-Children-and-the-Status-of-Women-in-Early-Ireland>. Accessed October 31, 2017.

²⁸ The concept of the Fast is now abused greatly by many politicians in India, skipping meals for a day or two to gain public sympathy for their agendas, another reason the Fast has become ineffective.

Fasting on or against a person and achieving justice by starvation. As far as can be understood, it consisted of fasting on the doorstep of the person or institution accused. The *troscad* was the means of compelling justice and establishing one's rights, and it was open to all members of Celtic society...If the hunger-striker died, the accused would suffer societal ostracism and would have to pay compensation to the dead person's family. The law said "he who does not give a pledge to fasting is an evader of all; he who disregards all things shall not be paid by God or man." If a plaintiff having duly fasted did not receive within a certain time the satisfaction of his claim, he was entitled to de-train [from the *troscad*] as in the case of an ordinary defendant, and to seize double the amount that would have satisfied him in the first instance.

The presence of this mechanism in ancient Irish society, a means of personal redress that did not physically harm the debtor but stuck his conscience, was available to all and the *Brehon* demanded that it be honored by all. This is an indication that the society had risen collectively to an awareness of the innate superiority of moral weapons over physical ones (or brute force) as a way to communicate with one another. There was an awareness of the necessity of justice for all; an acknowledgement that money and materialism were second to moral power. Of course, there were other problems; at no time in record that we are aware of, has humanity enjoyed the existence of a truly enlightened society. Yet nonetheless, it is clear that unending greed, brute-force and selfishness were not the ideals guiding life in old Ireland. Conscience was law, judge and King, supported by the *Brehon*.

The Hill of Tara brings Life under the Senchus Mor

The custom of imbuing places in Nature with holiness or preciousness in one form or another has

spared many small parts of the earth from the greed of man's axe. Both Ireland and India have sanctified numerous places in Nature. Visiting one such area, a holy town called Rishikesh in the foot of the Himalaya on the Ganges river, Gandhi wrote:

I was charmed with the natural scenery...and bowed my head in reverence to our ancestors for their sense of the beautiful in Nature, and for their foresight in investing beautiful manifestations of Nature with a religious significance.²⁹

The Hill of Tara holds a sacred place in the Nation Soul of Ireland; it was considered the center of the world to the ancient Celts; the place that united spiritual and temporal realms. It was where the Great Fair meetings for updating the *Brehon* took place. Carrying both the history and the mythologies of legendary Ireland, the Hill of Tara is laced with spring-fed streams; each swale and hollow has its sanctity, handed down through legends and tales. The Hill of Tara was the seat of the High Kings of Ireland, who were granted the title there upon its Stone of Destiny, (a standing granite piece whose origins are thought to be pre-Celtic) by their recognizable (or granted) proximity to justice and righteousness. It is a place from which nationalist military campaigns were launched seeking justice from British oppression, and where solstice festivals were held. Its ancient roots and ruins shroud a formerly known science of subtle energies, now slowly re-emerging. It is the *heart* of Ireland.

Currently there are different scholarly theories on when the *Brehon* began its descent into written law. Some suggest around 300 A.D., with one arbitrator, writing *The Book of Acaill*. Others say that in the 5th century with associates, an arbitrator worked with Kings and the High King and St. Patrick for three to six years to produce a law code conforming the *Brehon* to the Christian principles St. Patrick had brought to the land, and that the *Book of Acaill* and

²⁹ Gandhi, M.K. (2007). *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Navajivan, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.

the *Senchus Mor* were a reflection of this collaboration and melding of ideologies.³⁰ Other sources say that it is unprovable that St. Patrick was present when the *Senchus Mor* was put into text.

Despite inaccurate and conflicting records, it is known that a Great Fair meeting was held on the Hill of Tara to revise the Celtic *Brehon* in light of Christian principles. The revised *Brehon* became known after centuries as the *Senchus Mór*, the Grand Old Law. With the advent of Christianity through the spread of Catholicism and the development of the *Senchus Mór*, the powerful imagination of the Celtic psyche swung to envelope the ideals of the Christian faith, embracing the New Testament of Jesus Christ and His teachings. Old Ireland became known as being a Catholic country, a 'land of saints and scholars'. Their life examples infused ideals into the psyche of the people, moving them away from the material into the metaphysical, strengthening and clarifying the budding ethica of a future Nation Soul.

The *Senchus Mor* incorporated much of *Brehon* law, adapted to the 10 commandments and the Golden Rule of life, Do Unto Others as You would Have them Do Unto You: murder was outlawed. The Irish followed this code until the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1100 AD. Historians and scholars of the *Senchus Mor* tell us today that:

“[It included] the rules of legal procedure, a process of legal redress known as *athgabhail* or distress, the regulations around the use of fasting as a legal remedy, fosterage of children, marriages, and pledges, and, interestingly, it structured the significant custom of stock-taking i.e. where a noble loans property to clients in exchange for tribute, upon which the entire social hierarchy was based.

Sadly, we have been unable to salvage a full copy of this manuscript from the fragments of

a culture wrecked by colonisation. But, thanks to the efforts of the Brehon Law Commission (c. 1852), we do have access to the first, second, and a portion of the third volumes. Globally un-rivalled in its fullness, it gives an outstanding and rare perspective into the institutions, customs, beliefs, language, and culture of Irish society in ancient times.”³¹

Artistic, philosophical, scientific, and ethical refinement in Irish civilization was greatly abetted by the presence of religious and monastic institutions in society. India has perhaps the oldest known records of this type of enhancement for civilizational philosophical evolution. Buddhism and Jainism, placed from 800-500 B.C. embraced the ideals of personal renunciation, institutionalized them, and introduced numerous ethics that greatly impacted India's civilization and still do; *ahimsa*, vegetarianism, the rights of women to live a monastic life. Such a depth of philosophical inquiry does not arise from a blank slate. History does not tell us how long, how far back the presence of the ideal of renunciation and seeking to live a life cultivating moral virtues was alive in India. Information notwithstanding, the secular culture took ethical and philosophical cues, and fashioned itself accordingly into the incredible tapestry of philosophical inquiry that India continues to exhibit to this day. Later, Adi Shankaracharya, 500 A.D., spread a monotheistic outlook into the four corners of what is presently India through his own monastic institutions.

In Europe, the Middle Ages erroneously called 'the dark ages', were a time of flowering in the ethical life of civilization. The spread of universal moral principles through Catholic Christianity in Europe and Ireland, led to a blossoming of philosophy, art, music, literature, and inquiry into healing sciences and more, amongst the secular populations. By then, the

³⁰ Source: Library Ireland. Irish Books on Line. The *Senchus Mor* and other books of Law. Chapter 5. <http://www.libraryireland.com/SocialHistoryAncientIreland/I-IV-2.php> Accessed on November 11, 2017.

³¹ Brehon Law Academy (2014). *Irish Manuscripts: the Senchus Mor*. by Contributed. Source: <http://www.libraryireland.com/Brehon-Laws/Irish-Law-1.php> Accessed Nov. 1, 2017.

vast majority of people embraced rural agrarian lifestyles, which had normalized the routines of life and stabilized society. The intensity of work required to produce the necessities of life left little leisure time.

Monastic life had different routines, which allowed time for contemplation, study, the development of the arts, the furtherance of knowledge, the carrying on of intellectual traditions. With greater leisure, their work focusing on scholarship, adoration of holiness through music, literature, study, and other works, the monastic element in society served to raise awareness of piety and standards of philosophy, and to direct individual artistic expression towards adoration amongst the laity. The monastics kept a flow of ancient knowledge alive, preserving and copying ancient books. This created an evolving philosophical standard. This co-existent, symbiotic nature of religion's positive moral effect on civilization is often overlooked in scholarship on the Middle Ages and by many views of history.

The effects of that philosophical evolution we hear today in the remains of western classical music traditions which little music in the last one-hundred years in the western world has been able to parallel: Hildegard of Bingen,³² (1098-1179) a German nun, the *Anglorum Gloriam* by Anonymous in 1300, Handel and Bach (both b. 1685); all mightily inspired

by an inner adoration of a holistic life of harmony with the Creation and Creator. In Ireland there were many monastics who used the institution to serve and inspire the people. Besides St. Patrick, and many more revered persons, in great brevity, two are given here:

“Saint Brigid [Nun] established the Convent of Cill-Dara in County Kildare around 470 A.D., and founded a school of art here, which went on to produce the famous illuminated manuscript; the Book of Kildare³³...[.]...Saint Kevin was a hermit and a miracle worker, he was responsible for the monastery of Glendalough, Co. Wicklow and according to legend lived to the age of 120!”³⁴

By 600 A.D. Ireland was religiously well institutionalized and thereby philosophically more unified: monasteries, convents, abbeys, nunneries and friaries nestled in the Irish farm and forest filled landscape. There were innumerable small shrines dotting the countryside, filled with endearing relics of religious figures whose images pulled minds towards pure ideals. In these ways a constant visual awareness of an unseen ethical life was kept in remembrance which for many surrounded and supported their inner consecration. The Irish Round Tower was in use, its true purpose understood and in practice.³⁵

³² Hildegard's visions of the Earth's winds, oceans, land masses, her work as a Doctor to a steady stream of laity, and her musical compositions, were heralded in her day and then buried to the public eye for centuries. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8gK0_PgIgY

³³ Saint Brigid is now held as one of the three patron saints of Ireland, the other two being St. Patrick, and St. Columba. The *Book of Kildare* was an book of the Biblical Gospels with elaborately, intricately detailed illustrations, held to be divinely guided and carried out by a monastic scribe. No longer in existence, all that remains of that famous book is the eye-witness account by the Norman scribe, Giraldus Cambrensis, in 1185, who, a few years after the Norman invasion, when he arrived in Ireland visited the monastery of Kildare. Source: County Kidare Archeological Society, *The Book of Kildare* <http://www.kildarearchsoc.ie/the-book-of-kildare> Accessed November 15, 2017.

³⁴ Ireland Saints. (author not listed). Source: <http://www.discoveringireland.com/irelands-saints/> Accessed on November 15, 2017.

³⁵ The presence of Round Towers in Ireland has been the subject of much academic speculation. Some suggest the Round Towers appear similar to a large wind instrument. American scientist, Philip Callahan, (*Ancient Mysteries, Modern Vision* and in (*The Mysterious Round Towers of Ireland: Low Energy Radio in Nature*; The Explorer's Journal; Summer, 1993) points to 'connect-the-dot' relevancies that tie the Round

These monasteries, for the most part were humane and educational centers in their communities, serving people with medical help and hospitals, providing work, orphanages, schools. They advanced a conception of art through books that genuinely inspired people. Ireland then, probably had much in common with Tibet's former widespread monastic educational system and way of life.

Monastic life, a life consecrated to enhancing ethical instincts, was a viable goal of life for both men and women. It was a time when women were encouraged to see the ideal within themselves, and knew they had a choice: womanhood was a sacred gift, to be ideally used in the service of society, and love of God alone. To remain unmarried was a socially sanctioned decision. The young daughters of Ireland were raised with innumerable ideals of renunciation surrounding them. A woman's life also had a respected station in motherhood and family life.

At the same time, human corruption abounds, even where pure ideals are sought; power, and worse, attributes of divine authority, seems to have the

potential to corrupt completely. Immorality, secrecy, and repressive powers also existed in many monastic institutions, as was similarly found in the complex Buddhist monastic system (300 BC) that existed in Vihar (now Bihar), India. Gandhi was to leave his own ashram at Sabarmati, Ahmedabad, Gujarat in 1929 due to ethical and moral lapses and his inability to curtail them. By the mid 17th century, there are suggestions of families questioning the wisdom of sending their daughters to nunneries, their sons to monasteries; the institutional aspect appears to have fallen into disrepute in the eyes of society, perhaps centuries earlier. The efforts of the Celtic people, endowed with deep roots to an ancient way of being was slowly submerged through the grinding deep wheels of colonialism and the industrial revolution. Yet, simultaneously, it was the presence of injustice that kept the spirit of Ireland throbbing.

Today at the Hill of Tara

The massive upheaval that civilization has undergone since the Industrial Revolution's powerful rising a short century ago is glaringly evident today

Towers to terrestrial bodies and atmospheric energies that draw correlations of ways of being and knowing between the relics found in ancient Irish, Egyptian, and Mayan cultures.

Callahan discusses research which indicates that the round towers may have been designed, constructed and utilized as huge resonant systems for collecting and storing meter-long wavelengths of magnetic and electromagnetic energy coming from the earth and skies. Based on fascinating studies of the forms of insect antenna and their capacity to resonate to micrometer-long electromagnetic waves, Professor Callahan suggests that the Irish round towers (and similarly shaped religious structures throughout the ancient world) were human-made antennae, which collected and transmitted subtle magnetic radiation from the sun and passed it on to monks meditating in the tower and plants growing around the tower's base. The round towers were able to function in this way because of their form and also because of their materials of construction. Of the sixty-five towers that remain as ruins, twenty-five were built of limestone, thirteen of iron-rich, red sandstone, and the rest of basalt, clay slate or granite; all of these being minerals having paramagnetic properties that can thus act as magnetic antennae and energy conductors.

...Callahan further states that the mysterious fact of various towers being filled with rubble for portions of their interiors was not random but rather may have been a method of tuning the tower antenna so that it more precisely resonated with various specific frequencies... [the author states] "Most books will tell you that the towers were places of refuge for the monks to hide from Vikings raiding Ireland. They were, no doubt, bell towers and lookouts for approaching raiders, but the speculations that monks escaped raiders, who no doubt knew how to smoke bees out of hives or climb the 9 to 15 feet to the door, borders on the ludicrous. Round towers are perfectly designed to be totally useless for hiding people or church treasures." Callahan, P. (1984) *Ancient Mysteries, Modern Visions*. Acres Publishers. Austin, TX USA. Kriesberg, G. *Lost knowledge of the Ancients: a Graham Hancock Reader*; and (1834) *The Round Towers of Ireland*.

in what has happened at the sacred Hill of Tara. At present, out of the public eye and ear, the Hill of Tara was listed in an archaeological listing in 2005 as one of the top seven endangered sacred sites in the world. In 2010, it became the site of a massive “camp-in” form of *Satyagraha* by those who were opposed to ‘development’ plans. Their concerns had the ethos of the Irish Nation Soul at heart.

The extraordinary amount of archaeological remains on the Hill of Tara—burial mounds, religious enclosures, stone structures, and rock art dating from the third millennium B.C. to the twelfth century A.D.—makes it Ireland’s most spiritually and archaeologically significant site. Construction of the new M3 highway, meant to ease traffic congestion around Dublin, threatens not only the Hill of Tara’s timeless quality, but also newly discovered archaeological sites in the surrounding valley....Although archaeologists and concerned Irish politicians are rallying support worldwide for the protection of the Hill of Tara, the iconic site remains in great peril.³⁶

Independent polls showed that over 70% of Ireland’s people did not want the highway to impair or damage this sacred site. At present, with a ‘globally tied economy’ described to the people as the ‘Celtic Tiger’, and elected officials placed opportunely through the courtesies of big industry, the callousness of government to the will of the people had become glaringly apparent. Demands for public transport like trains have been ignored, turning Ireland into what some call the Isle of Concrete, as roads, block town-houses, suburbs, strip malls, the emblems of the consumer economy, devour the landscape. Combined, these factors have now made Ireland one of the largest emitters of noxious carbon gases in the European Union.

Young and old patriots found that despite the emphasis on material gratification marketed to them as being the ‘real’ marker of a successful life from their own infancy, they could not be indifferent nor asleep to the gifts of their Mothers, the messages of Earth and water, found in the blood within them, nurtured by the soils, and atmosphere of Ireland’s legacies. They were not alone.³⁷ In three separate rulings, the European Commission ruled that the government of Ireland had to take the Environmental Impact Assessment report for the Hill of Tara and surrounding areas into account. The ruling government of Ireland faced daily fines of 4000£ per day since 2008 for bucking the orders. Nonetheless, money “walks and talks”. The M3 Motorway opened on the 4th of June, 2010. From a steadfast protester, one of the present generation of youth who had camped in the *satyagraha* on the Hill of Tara for long months:

The last few days have been very calm, serene even, but what little sleep I got last night I awoke from crying. I guess it had to come out somewhere. This morning that old familiar rush of adrenaline replaced any sadness felt as we gathered at the Car Park with a Garda helicopter circling overhead. They circled Rath Lugh too. I don’t know what they expected but we heard through the reliable grapevine that the Politicians were nervous...

We had a mandolin, fiddle and tin whistle player to entertain us too, God bless the Musicians. We stayed there for over two hours—during the whole time that the opening ceremony was held further on up the road – we didn’t have a chance to get any nearer to it as the cars that passed us on their way all had special passes and were inspected by Gardaí. The whole operation must have cost a pretty penny. While there, we were

³⁶ Source: www.savetara.com. Accessed 2011.

³⁷ This *Satyagraha* went on for several years and was hosted at www.savetara.com which is no longer locatable as noticed Nov. 1, 2017.

interviewed by several film crews and newspapers. I wonder how much of it will make it to mainstream media – but sure what of it.

Eventually we headed up to the car park at the Hill and held another protest there. Vincent Salafia of Tarawatch did a good interview with TV3 and while I hope that sound bite made it to air...

Cars passing by beeped in support which perplexed me as I wondered what the [expletive] were they doing on the [expletive] Motorway!?! Others gave us the fingers, at least I could understand them!

Some still remain now at Lismullin Bridge but most of us finished our day by steeping our feet in the Gabhra at late evening. It was a lovely end to the day. I am so glad we did that. The communal gathering had a very healing effect as we let the intense heat of the day and all its emotions be washed away in Her cooling Sacred waters. Bless each and every one who turned up today in those soaring temperatures and those that couldn't make it but had us and Tara in their thoughts.³⁸

This process, of churning people (and now our very organs), 'intellectual property', flora, fauna, the earth itself into profits, has only gained momentum. At present over 54% of all people on Earth live in urban areas,³⁹ and are necessarily, whether pulling a substantial or inadequate paycheck, *wage slaves*. This whirlwind upheaval, world-wide, has been supported by conditioning and educating people away from civilizational ideals of abstention, self-restraint, caution, frugality, thrift, self-reliance, and towards

license. Nonetheless, the global models for modern education, taken from the days of British colonialism's need for local labour and administration, persist in ever-expanding 'developed' and 'developing' pockets of populations throughout the world. Likewise, the colonized Irish people had been subjected to an educational system that is geared towards enhancing and advancing the interests of governing power under the sway of industry, technology, and profits for a few.

Has the need for a moral coherency in thought, word, and deed in order to serve oneself and society best, been 'educated' out of people? It seems to be something that cannot be stomped out.

Prior to the industrial upheaval of civilization that was to start in the 1800's, this was the awakening 'spirit' of Ireland, her gently throbbing Nation Soul waiting to be born in the full unity of all within her shores. In this, the organically evolving governance of old Ireland was also similar to older India's Nation Soul. As Bishop Azariah⁴⁰ of Dornakal, India, had noted about the qualities of this type of Soul:

We in India know what this spirit consists: a sensitiveness to the supernatural and a frank recognition of man's dependence upon God in all details of life, the recognition of the infinite priority of moral and spiritual claims to the material, and an open disdain of physical and creature comforts, in the pursuit, and for the sake of moral and spiritual attainments.

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³⁸ The Heritage Journal. (June 6, 2010.) *Hill of Tara M3 Motorway Opened*. By Carmel Diviney. Source: <https://heritageaction.wordpress.com/2010/06/06/hill-of-tara-m3-motorway-opened/> Accessed Nov. 1, 2017.

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⁴⁰ The Bishop saw these qualities of India's Soul as being present in Gandhi as well.

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A Beacon of Service

*S. Pandian**

Once Thakkar Bapa visited Shri Bashyam Iyengar's house at Chennai. Iyengar's son who was a Doctor asked Thakkar Bapa what was the value of life. At once Thakkar Bapa gave the following couplet:

"I crave not for Kingdom, Swarga
or freedom from future birth.
The alleviation of distress of
the suffering humanity is all I long for".

He worked in various fronts such as education, women's welfare, upliftment of Adivasis, Removal of untouchability, Harijan upliftment, Labour welfare, Khadi work, State subjects welfare and above all Famine and Flood relief.

In 1920, Thakkar performed one of the most memorable services in Orissa. It was then a land of distress and poverty. Orissa was suffering extremely from widespread famine. The famine was intense.

Thakkar Bapa went to Orissa and took famine relief measures. His famine relief work was not just an incident in the history of misery of Orissa; it was really the beginning of public life in Orissa.

His work there was very significant. When the Servants of India Society wanted to send him to Guiana, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Srinivasa Sastri its first member (President) as follows:

"The work to be done there (Guiana) is not to be compared with the work he is at present doing in Orissa. Any third rate man can go to Guiana but no one can efficiently replace him in Orissa."

Thakkar Bapa at the outset went round the villages, undertook about 250 kilometres journey in

Kutch roads and village tracks and enquired about the existing distress. Then he toured in the district of Puri and also ascertained the measures adopted by the Government and the public to relieve the distress suffered.

He found and wrote in 'The Servant of India' dated 20th May 1920 amongst others the following:

"In August, floods came in the river Kushabhadra and its embankment was burst and thereby an area of about 400 square kilometres between that river and Bhargavi was flooded. The water was 10 feet high and it stood therein for about six weeks. It washed away the monsoon crop and spoiled the autumn crop. Cultivators and labourers were pushed to a condition of utter poverty and destitution."

Earlier in 1919, due to the then prevailing condition people, in the month of May asked the Government to declare famine. Shri Gopabandhu Das spoke about the famine in the district in March in the Legislative Council, showing pictures, producing sample herbs and powdered rice husk, which the affected people used as food. But it was of no avail. For the relief of suffering people the Government did nothing. On the other hand, individuals and various non-official agencies came forward to provide relief to an extent. Shri Sakhi Chand, Police Superintendent of the district in his private capacity and Hindi Natya Samaj of Calcutta came forward to help. Sakhi Chand opened an orphanage and a hospital. The Servants of India Society sent Shri Sahu with some funds.

After a lapse of time, leisurely, due to the pressure of public opinion the then Commissioner of

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the Orissa Division visited the area in a cursory way. And subsequently he rebutted the versions given by the public, the press and Shri Das in the Legislative Council. He stated that the situation was not serious.

As there was a difference of opinion between the official and non-official estimates the Lt. Governor Edward Gait visited the areas on 7th April. To a certain extent, relief measures were taken thereafter. Rice and food were distributed freely and a Deputy Collector was appointed for the purpose. The rice and food supplied were not even upto the provisions of the Famine Code.

Children, aged people and the sick were largely and severely affected and lost their lives in large numbers. Youths too had expired due to lack of food. Had the Government offered relief earlier, many lives of wandering men could have been saved. Thakkar Bapa had the misfortune of seeing with his own eyes persons dying in front of him.

According to the Famine code, Police should report to the Government, cases of want and starvation. As they did not report the real situation earlier, they simply reported starvation deaths as deaths due to disease such as fever, cholera or dysentery. Thus police had misled the Government and prevented taking of any action and indirectly they had caused deaths which could have been averted, had they reported the situation truly.

Women had no clothes to wear and they were dressed in rags. Girls were found in langotis. To take care of famine orphans and set people again on their legs, very large sums were required. Thakkar Bapa published an appeal to Bengal Zamindars and others who had Estates in Orissa, Marwari Merchants of Calcutta and generous millionaires of Bombay to send money. He appealed for donations to the extent of a lakh of rupees. In no time, more than a lakh of rupees of donations were received. It was made possible because it was Thakkar Bapa, who sought donations. People knew that if money was given to Thakkar Bapa, every pie of the entire amount would be spent towards

the purpose for which it was given and the account of income and expenditure would be supplied to the donors by Thakkar Bapa positively.

Thakkar Bapa used to spend for his own purposes only his own allowances given by the Servants of India Society which was a meager amount. He used to have a poor man's food for himself, while travelling he would get old puris from platform vendors and eat them. For clothing, he used to have not more than three sets and used to wash and wear them. He could sleep on any surface. Whenever he went to places he would take whatever was offered. Even Gandhi who had a simple life had his own menu.

Later on, the Government thought fit to explain its eight months delay in providing relief. Yet they did not accept that there was famine or deaths due to starvation. They said there was some scarcity and at the instance of Government officials, non-officials provided requirements. And that it was false to report that there were deaths due to starvation and that they were due to simple diseases only.

Thakkar Bapa did all his mite in relieving the distress of the people affected by flood. He saw people were provided food, clothed and sheltered. During famine, he ensured able bodied men got employed.

He trained local students and youth in helping others and helping themselves. He inculcated in them, the spirit of public service.

Thakkar Bapa was considered to be the 'Father of Orissa'. Hare Krishna Mehtab who was a student volunteer in Orissa flood relief work and later on became the Chief Minister of Orissa wrote:

"It is Thakkar Bapa who set the ideal of service before the young men of Orissa in these days.... He adopted the province of Orissa as his own. Shri Thakkar vigorously pleaded for the development of the Mahanadi Valley, giving facts and figures in support of the plea. The public life of Orissa is inextricably mixed up with the humanitarian activities of Thakkar Bapa.

Our public life began and when any distress occurred in Orissa, telegrams used to be sent to Shri Thakkar and he used to come. His energy and devotion to work were putting all of us to shame”.

To day, public life has nothing to do with humanitarian activities. Let us pray that public life is associated with humanitarian activities.

Amritlal was the second son of his parents, Vithaldas Lalji Thakkar and Muliba. He was born on 29th November 1869 at Bhavanagar, (Gujarat).

Amritlal after graduating in Engineering was employed as an Engineer. He worked in various places. While he was working as an engineer with the Bombay Municipality, he came into contact with the Sweepers and Scavengers who were working under him. He came to know of the nature of their work and the miserable conditions in which they were working and living. He decided to alleviate their sufferings. Thus started his public work for the benefit of the suffering, downtrodden people. He started activities to remove the oppression of the poor. His service continued till his last days.

Yes, really he was a beacon to social workers.

Sewagram International Conference on Nonviolent Economy for a Peaceful World

*Jill Carr-Harris**

On the 27th, 28th and 29th of October 2017, sixty persons congregated in Wardha to speak about the nonviolent economy. Spearheading this program was Louis Campana, President of Gandhi International from France and a follower of the late Lanza del Vasto. Louis had first journeyed to India in 1999 to find out more about del Vasto's meeting with Gandhi in 1938, and how his Italian mentor had found peace in the midst of Mussolini's rise to power by learning about Gandhi's nonviolence. Lanza del Vasto returned to France and after the Second World War had set up what became a flagship peace community known as Arche. Louis, and his partner, Isabella had grown up on the Arch in France, and they were curious to know more about Gandhi's role in the genesis of the work that they carried out in France.

After the introductory trip in 1999, Louis encouraged the Institute of Gandhian Studies in Wardha, to hold a workshop in 2008. This led to the founding of Gandhi International. In 2010 Gandhi International cosponsored a nonviolent economy meeting with Ekta Parishad in the city of Bhopal. The gas tragedy that had happened in 1984, was the backdrop in which a call was made for a new kind of economy, one that would not be harmful to people and to the environment. The 2010 meeting was a watershed meeting in which the contours were explored of a needs based, decentralized and an ethical economy. Different French groups advanced the results of experiments in small-scale agriculture, ethical banking, cooperatives; Indian associates discussed both Gandhian and ecologically sustainable solutions

in India. Although this was the first conference of its kind, the follow up was weak, because friends in India were still affixed on the benefits of an industrialized economy without yet experiencing its deleterious effects, and therefore relegated the huge strides of the Sarvodaya movement in nonviolent economy to the margins of history, in favour of what perceived as modernization.

Gandhi International continued to connect with the Gandhians in India. Their work with Bajaj Foundation in choosing an international candidate from Palestine in 2017, Ziad Medoukh, for his work in standing up against Israeli occupation nonviolently, was a contribution. Also they worked with the Institute of Gandhi Studies, Wardha to carry out an International conference on the occasion of the 80th Anniversary of Gandhi's meet with Lanza del Vasto in 1938 in Wardha. In honouring of this memory, the conference on nonviolent economy and building of a peaceful world was to be held in Shanti Bhawan, Seva Gram Ashram.

Seva Gram International Conference

Sixty persons attended from six countries and this was based on paper interventions for two days, followed by a third day of planning for future action.

The key note inaugural address was given by Justice Dharmadhikari. As a child, Justice Dharmadhikari remembered Lanza del Vasto (Shantidas), in particular for his visit to give lectures at the Gujarat Vidyapith in 1977. According to

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Dharmadhikari, Lanzo del Vasto had picked up the importance of 'community', and in the struggle against the French military base's expansion onto agricultural land in Larzac, the community was activated to force the government to withdraw their base. Thereafter the French friends of Arch developed a deep ecological consciousness.

Justice Dharmadhikari pointed out that the multinational companies that are 'neither working for any national good for the benefit of people in countries in which they are expanding their business empires'; and their main economic principle is exploitation. He called for an economy that was based on ethics and morality.

In assisting the conference members with framing a Gandhian nonviolent economy as an alternative to globalization, there were three papers that were presented theorizing from Gandhi. The first was given by Dr. Ram Chandra Pradhan, a prolific author on Gandhi and formerly Professor of Ramjas College of Delhi University; the second, was John Chelladurai of Gandhi Research Foundation in Jalgaon; and the third was, Mithilesh Kumar of the Mathatma Gandhi Antarashtriya Hindi Viswavidyalaya, Wardha.

Pradhan, an associate of Jay Prakash Narayan and the Bihar movement, reminded us that the economic thinking of Gandhi grew out of his concept of man, world, and God. Gandhi was rooted in an *advaitic* vision that led him to believe in the perfectibility of man. His sense of a transcendent God did not allow him to accept either the concept of 'original sin' or the western concept of an 'economic man', rather it was union with man and God which was the basis of his monotheism. According to Pradhan, Gandhi did of course believe in bringing spiritualization to politics, and linked nonviolence in the inner, with the outer polity.

In speaking about Pradhan's main work on *swaraj* (See *Raj to Swaraj*), he showed the dualism that existed between parliamentary *swaraj* (achieving

parliamentary democracy) and Gandhi's vision of *panchayati swaraj* or 'bottom-up' development from the village or small group unit. This is the reason, Pradhan argues, he developed an economic theory that valued need over greed. Also he understood that removing wealth from the wealthy was not a sustainable solution. It would mean that people's capabilities would not be valued, but forced to some uniformity on them. Also Gandhi believed in the freedom and integrity of the individual and therefore this was not to be compromised in favor of removing all private property. So the basic tenet of trusteeship is that people should own and use their resources including individual property and also see themselves as a trustee for society.

John Chelladurai in his paper on the "Principle of Economic Permanence", he added that the element that goes into making a nonviolent economy is a reflection of Truth and its law nonviolence, so 'life' is experienced at the individual life, but social life is possible only through cooperation and mutuality. (This naturally is *sarvodaya* if practiced.) Thus all humans have an equal right to life and in that social life there is the respect given to nature that is to be used judiciously.

From this John Chelladurai draws out four economic fields: *swadeshi*, or neighborhood economy; trusteeship or use of one's resources for one's needs and all else is "in trust" for others; decentralization of production that is a part of a non-exploitative life; and bread labour, which is surviving on one's own labour.

Mithilesh spoke of the Economy of Permanence. This is an alternative development model based on agriculture, rural industries, sanitation, health and housing along with village education, organization and culture. It is based on self-reliant development, but it is also seen as nonviolent as well as being ethical. As the individual is involved in production, consumption is vastly reduced and redistribution is a matter of course, not just a point of regulation.

After looking at this global framework, it was necessary to see how different experiments at the local level feed into this global framework. Fortunately the long years of community experiments of the Ark in France as well as the local Wardha programs of Center for Science in Villages and Agrindus in India were discussed and compared. This led to discussion on how the local, decentralized, need-based economy can be developed more broadly.

Professor G.S. Murty from Vizaknapatnam believed that nonviolent economy was not possible but moving in stages towards green economy, sustainable development and de-growth was important for the future. Artur Domingo Barnil from Catalonia, the state demanding self-determination, analyzed how Gandhi was relevant in shaping the new economy being proposed in the discussions of an independent state. Although the fate of Catalonia is not clear, Barnil felt that the contribution of Gandhi is both having a social vision for revolution and individual transformation, makes him an important contemporary leadership. On this subject he is writing a book. Carr-Harris added to the discussion on leadership by speaking on how 'good leaders' come from organic and grassroots processes that reflect real people and genuine concerns. She exemplified the work of Ela Bhatt from SEWA (Self-employed Women's Association) as not only having helped women with livelihood and making them central to development, but also has built a large number of women leaders that take independent decisions on their local economy and keeping it sustainable.

Professor Jeevan Kumar of Karnataka, spoke about how the environmental movement beginning with the Brundtland Commission, as an effort that reinvented a sustainable development curbing the excesses of the global economy, but how it failed to because of: the absence of any historical or structural understanding of poverty, hunger, and inequity; it did not focus on direct democratic governance; there was an inability to see the biophysical limits to economic growth; there was continued subservience

to private capital and a high dependence on modern science and technology; there was little attention to culture, ethics and spirituality; there has been unbridled consumerism and a lack of any self-reliance.

Jeevan Kumar put forward the Gandhian concept of swaraj that fits the contemporary ecological crisis by calling it ecological swaraj or 'radical ecological democracy' (RED), a term coined by Kothari in 2014. This is known as a framework that grew out of numerous discussions by grassroots communities (Vikalp Sangam) in terms of what it means to live within the limits of the earth with the rights of nature while still working toward social justice and positive change. Civil society is put in the middle of this economy not corporations. There is a website for people to post their different experiments (www.kalpavriksh.org) so as to add to increasing collective wisdom on transformative alternatives. Alternatives are carefully redefined to be not only an 'experiment, but also a principle, policy process, technology or concept/framework'. They basically relate to eleven spheres, that are: society, culture and peace; alternative economies and technologies; livelihoods; settlements and transportation; alternative politics; knowledge and media; environment and ecology; learning and education; health and hygiene; food and water; and global relations. All of these based on the right principles can lead to an alternative future. There is a suggestion that this provides the reader with a holistic vision of how to build forward.

In looking at the global, Rajagopal brought home the Jai Jagat campaign 2019-2020 which is building from local to global. Clearly the global economy has led to immense violence. Retreating to 'the local' does not remove the violence rather it is sown into the local economy. The only way then is to one at the same time expunge the violence is to link the local action with the global vision of peace and justice. Then Rajagopal laid out the three-year agenda for that to occur.

The nonviolent economy for a peaceful world ended with a sense of hope and good things to come.

SEVAGRAM DECLARATION ON NONVIOLENT ECONOMY, SUSTAINABILITY AND VIOLENCE-FREE WORLD

Gandhi International (France) and the **Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha (India)** provided a forum for organizations, institutions and individuals interested in promoting non-violence and peace in the world to discuss threadbare a number of questions relating to Non-violent Economy, sustainability and violence free world in the **Sevagram International Congress on Non-violent Economy and Peaceful world** held at Wardha, India in October, 2017. This conference was organized in commemoration and celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Meeting of Lanza del Vasto, popularly known as Shanti Das with Mahatma Gandhi in 1937 at Wardha. The following is the **Sevagram Declaration on Nonviolent Economy, Sustainability and Violence-Free World**.

PREAMBLE

We are convinced that the current globalised and liberalized economy has engineered or resulted in marginalization of deprived sections of society or the last person, growing inequality-widening gap between the rich and poor, growing unemployment and jobless growth, over-exploitation of natural resources both renewable and non-renewable, negative impact on eco-system and environment. In addition, it has been successful in imposing certain values and practices and a development pattern which ensure its continuance or sustenance. We all agree that in the place of such an economy based on violence the foundations of a nonviolent economy need to be laid, in order to have an environmentally sustainable and peaceful world. Such an economy would ensure livelihood and food security for all. We express great concern over the growing violence in all walks of life and the threat created by weapons of mass destruction

especially the nuclear weapons. We urge the nations possessing nuclear weapons and their partners in nuclear alliance and others to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ratify the same by respective governments through legislative process so that banning of nuclear weapons will become a reality. We feel that nations should take steps for unilateral disarmament as voluntary act. To realize the goal of nonviolent/peaceful world order, the youth should be given non violent training and education to engage them in peace action. In the light of above, it has been decided to have a common platform of people and organizations having faith in non-violence to share and exchange the local experiences of non-violent alternatives and extend support to such initiatives. It will also give voice to voice less people in different continents more particularly in countries facing large scale violence like Mexico, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and many others. This platform will also work as focal point for communication and documentation of non-violent action.

Visualising Gandhian economy in Globalised and liberalized world

Economic globalization has resulted in concentrating power in the hands of neo-colonial institutions like World Bank and IMF, multi-national corporations, military, arms Industries and advanced industrialized countries. It has taken away economic and political power from national, State and local governments and communities. In addition, it is adversely affecting national sovereignty, community control, democracy, diversity and the environment. The so called development pattern emerged from this

economy forcing the State to frame laws to cater the vested interest of multinational companies or the bodies which control financial sector. The States should frame laws keeping in mind the welfare for the people and should not be under the pressure any of these forces. This form of globalization needs to be reframed and transformed. However, the positive dimensions of global inter-cultural and economic relations should also be integrated into the new system which we are visualizing.

What is needed is to build an economy for the service of the people which would ensure harmony with Nature and would be inherently nonviolent. Societies need to internalize the values of nonviolence, harmony with Nature, dialogue and non-patriarchal values in which the role of women is recognized and appreciated. It is necessary to build peace and harmony at all regional as well as continental levels, and in all countries. The challenges or onslaught of Globalization and liberalization require us to make use of Gandhian principles for a dignified humane economy and for the survival of the planet. It should be based on Gandhian principles like democratic governance, *swadeshi*, ecological sustainability, common heritage resources, respect for diversity, *sarvodaya* equity, need based not greed based economy, decentralized production and distribution, appropriate technology, trusteeship and bread labour.

Ensuring Livelihood / Food Security in a Sustainable Way

In order to ensure livelihood and food security for people all over the globe in a sustainable way, there is an urgent need to revive traditional and indigenous means of livelihood through local/rural resource based on small scale /village industries using appropriate technology

To check the onslaught of highly mechanized, genetically modified, MNC controlled seeds, fertilizers and pest-control methods under highly commercialized industrial agriculture system, it is necessary to promote organic indigenous agricultural practices like use of traditional pest resistant seeds and

its preservation through farmers, organic manure, local water shed management system. It is also needed to ensure food security to growing population including landless and marginalized sections through appropriate and equitable agrarian systems like traditional, organic and natural farming and new agricultural practices such as biodynamics, permaculture and agro-ecology. An appropriate service sector conducive to traditional means of livelihood should be developed.

Towards a Violence/War /Nuclear Weapon free world

There is an imminent threat of Third World War from weapons of mass destruction mainly of nuclear weapons due to the growing tensions among different countries of the world. The present scenario is an alarming one in view of threat from the new generation nuclear weapons, the issue of small nukes, the precession targeting through technological advancement, huge budget for nuclear expansion, social cost of nuclearisation, command and control of the nuclearisation. In addition there are number of issues like nuclear accidents, health hazards due to radiations, nuclear waste disposal, and social conflicts arising out of the beneficiaries of the nuclear powers and others environmental pollutions. There is also a possibility of accessing of nuclear weapons by antisocial elements or terrorist groups, which may be suicidal and for the very survival of the species and planet earth.

The restriction on the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons under UN System like Non Proliferation treaty (1968), legality of the threat or use of Nuclear Weapons advisory opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996 were found inadequate and ineffective to check the growing menace of these weapons. The adoption of the treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear weapons on 7th July 2017 and the subsequent signing of the treaty by more than 50 countries on 20th September 2017 give some hope for the total banning of nuclear weapons in future. To achieve this goal public opinion should

be mobilized and put moral pressure on all nations especially those possessing nuclear weapons.

The social media could play an important role in sensitizing the people and creating public opinion against it. For the same, there is need for effective use of electronic and print media which include writing of articles, letters to the editors, use of Face book, Twitter, BlogSpot, websites, YouTube etc. In addition, exhibitions on the threat of nuclear energy, events and demonstrations, social gatherings, awareness programmes in educational institutions including schools and universities, religious groups and other forums prayer meetings and vigil should be organized. Advocacy and networking of organizations, institutions and individuals should be garnered for signing and ratification of the treaty by those holding nuclear weapons and others.

We have to imagine weapons free world and work for total disarmament with focus on all kinds of weaponry systems of mass destruction and demilitarization of war zones. We have to combat terrorism through non-violent means by identifying the root causes and addressing them and move towards a non-violent/peaceful world order.

Nonviolent Training and Education to Engage Youth in Peace Actions

Violence is perpetuated through deprivation, denials and segregation in the name of race, caste, religion and other divisive concepts resulting in social violence. Against this background of engineered inequality, we have to evolve social engineering that could mitigate violence, injustice and denial of human rights. The wide gap in the schooling provided to the rich and the poor creates inequality, cutthroat competition and violence. Further education provided by religious institutions of fundamentalist groups creates feeling of hatred and violence among the pupils. Such a scenario calls training in non violent action and providing right kind of education with a goal to engage youth in peace action. The experiences of the *Non Violent Generation* in Senegal, *Gandhi Monks*

in Congo and *Shanti Sena* training in India could be emulated for preparing the youth for non-violent action.

A new pattern of education around Gandhi's "nai talim" or basic education could be developed to create self reliant youth capable of leading a non-violent life promoting values of cooperation and harmony in the society. Parents and teachers should be provided appropriate training so that they can work as partners in education. Education provided in the schools should promote interreligious harmony by respecting all religions and secular/ atheist ideas. Peace education, non-violence and human rights should become part of the curriculum. These key areas should not be taught in a dogmatic way. To address the issue of millions of school drop-outs entrepreneurial or special skills should be imparted to them so that they would not turn into anti-social elements or preys in the hands of extremists. The rehabilitation of the young excluded people like street and migrant children is indispensable to avoid them falling into criminal activities and prostitution etc.

Youngsters appreciate arts, music, movies, social media and sports. The messages of non-violence could be effectively activated through these mediums by youngsters, adults and others. Some concerts and arts events can help them to discover the issues involved in the practice of nonviolence. Different non-violent mobilizations should be introduced to the youngsters for giving them a positive vision of the future.

A Common Platform for promoting Non-violent Action, Documentation and Communication

There is need for a common platform of communication and documentation to maintain the dynamics of the group and to continue to exchange local experiences of non-violent alternatives in the coming years. This platform will include people and organizations having faith in non-violence and will support nonviolent actions/movements and similar

other campaigns and mobilizations all over the globe including *Gandhi 150*, *Jai Jagat 2020*, *Caravan for a Living Planet* and many others. This platform may also try to understand the different point of views of opponents by initiating the process of dialogue with them through its partners. It will provide all possible means of communication to keep the people informed about various actions in this direction.

Conclusion

This Conference was an opportunity for us to feel more and more determined to struggle together towards a world with more justice and peace through non-violent means. Each of us at individual and societal levels will commit to implement the ideas stated in this declaration.

This declaration is an appeal to organizations, institutions, governments, world forums, and international organizations, particularly to United Nations.

REPORT: Gathering on Common Ground: Building Harmony through Diversity in Canada and India*

Goodes Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, June 25-27, 2017

*Paul Schwartzentruber***

The conference, *Gathering on Common Ground: Building Harmony through Diversity in Canada and India*, was held at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, June 25-27, 2017. The objective of the conference was to build on existing Canadian and Indian approaches for addressing societal issues in an effort to develop even more innovative and effective practices for moving forward. 'Mutual Accommodation'—as developed by William A. Macdonald (<https://canadiandifference.ca/William+A+Macdonald+Essays>), has been a key practice in Canada whereas 'Nonviolent Action' in the Gandhian tradition has been used extensively in India <http://ektaparishad.com>. Both approaches have enabled significant progress, but major challenges remain. Some, such as the state of indigenous peoples, have been present throughout both countries' histories. New issues are emerging as our societies become more diverse. The conference was built on our experiences and harnessed our increasing diversity to identify new approaches to addressing societal issues.

Approximately 52 participants from Canada and India attended. The attendees were very diverse across multiple dimensions, i.e., male and female, Indian and Canadian etc.

Overview of the Format and Process

In its design, the conference was intended to be a 'working conference'. That is to say, while there

were initial keynotes and some plenary presentations/ panel discussions on the two overarching themes of the conference, i.e., mutual accommodation and nonviolent social integration, the primary work of the conference was carried out in small roundtable workshop groups organized around 4 thematic or challenge areas (the issues of religious and ethnic minorities; indigenous issues; gender based issues; and the issue of poverty). Each of these roundtable groups, with the help of facilitators, decided on a concrete problem they wished to address within their challenge area and then developed innovative ways of tackling it. Each group produced a report out to all attendees at the end of the conference. These reports are appended to this report.

Since the conference, the organizers have polled the attendees for feedback and willingness to proceed further with their work they had started. A series of conference calls for those interested was organized in order to plan further action and identify leaders. Several of the groups intend to continue working on the project proposals and the organizers intend to continue to support them in that work. The hope is that this will generate an ongoing collaborative efforts to further develop and implement some of the proposal. Ultimately, it is hoped that a follow-up conference will be held in India in 2019 (the 150th anniversary of Gandhiji's birth).

* With gratitude to Ronnie

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Introductions and Review of the Plenary Sessions

After registration, attendees gathered in the amphitheatre for the plenary sessions. The first order of business was a welcome and acknowledgement by a ‘Grandmother’ of the first peoples, Laurel Claus-Johnson. Ms. Johnson noted the location of the conference on the traditional land of the Six Nations Iroquois and reminded the participants of the traditional teaching of the ‘Peacemaker’ of the Iroquois people. She welcomed them to a discussion of the teachings of ‘mutual accommodation’ and ‘nonviolence’ in that spirit.

There was then a greeting offered by the Queen’s University Vice Principal of Advancement, Thomas J. Harris, who welcomed the attendees and introduced the Deputy High Commissioner of India to Canada Arun Kumar Sahu. Mr Sahu spoke of India’s diversity as a great strength and noted that it was rooted in diverse peoples actually living together. He shared several stories in which the various religious traditions of India taught and supported this diversity of belief. He concluded that Mahatma Gandhi provided a great impetus to the model of nonviolent debate as well as to the secular state envisioned by Nehru. He also noted that India had had a very different experience of colonization than Canada.

There followed a welcome by one of the co-organizers, Hugh Helferty who spoke of his life-long interest in and commitment to dialogue between India and Canada and his rootedness in both countries. He encouraged participants to develop innovative approaches to the problems that still existed in each country and offered a model of that innovative problem solving in the story of Maharshi Karve, his wife’s great-grandfather. Professor Karve dedicated himself to the education of women at a time when only 1% of Indian women were literate. He founded the Maharshi Karve Institute in Pune (now 25,000 students) and SNDT Women’s University in Mumbai (now 70,000 students). Mr. Helferty suggested that innovation has three components: “recognizing/reframing a problem, conceiving an innovative approach and implementing it.” (Talk included in Appendix 2).

Mr. Helferty then introduced the first of the keynote speakers, William A. Macdonald.

William Macdonald, Keynote

Mr Macdonald introduced the idea of mutual accommodation as “a better way of distinguishing Canada and its so-called special tolerance” and he urged that it become the “shared narrative of Canada”. He noted that “the First Nations, Metis and Inuit) were Canada’s biggest piece of unfinished mutual accommodation business” but that, regardless, Canada became a great country because it “put what works ahead of nationalism, ethnic difference, religion, class and ideology.” He continued:

“Canada’s defining narrative began early, with the reliance, amid a difficult geography, of European traders and settlers on aboriginal people. Over the centuries, the nation that has emerged has continued – in fact, extended – this tradition of mutual shaping and accommodation. Canada has not been entirely free of violence, but its primary markers have been a blend of vision and of what works on the ground. In this way, it has become a great country unlike any other in history. It is a different kind of great country for a very different kind of world.”

Mr. Macdonald went on to speak of the social vision of Samuel de Champlain, the national vision of John A. Macdonald and the political vision of Wilfred Laurier as significant guideposts in Canadian history

He concluded by noting that

Mutual accommodation involves two fundamentals. One is effective two-way communication – careful listening and careful speaking. The other requires a belief that a shared and meaningful order exists at the heart of things.

He also urged consideration of the fact that mutual accommodation had a global value as one of the better ways “human have found to go about things”. (Notes for the talk are included in Appendix 3).

A vigorous discussion ensued. Several challenges were offered from indigenous participants from Canada who argued that it was not enough to call Canada a great country and describe its treatment of indigenous people as “unfinished business”. Canada’s narrative was also a colonial one and, with regard to the first peoples, as well as with many of its immigrants past and present. Quotations from John A Macdonald and other leaders were offered to make this point. Questions were also raised about whether Canada’s history was in fact less violent than that of America. Mr. Macdonald responded that he had recognized this issue of indigenous people several times and was appalled by some things that had been done, such as separating indigenous children from their parents. He maintained that the narrative of Canada as a ‘great country’ of mutual accommodation was still valid.

After a short break the conference was called back to order by Paul Schwartzentruber the other co-organizer. Mr. Schwartzentruber spoke briefly about his ancestral heritage in Canada and also about his experience in India as a volunteer for Ekta Parishad. He spoke about the need for inclusivity and his vision of Canada as a place of ‘welcoming in’ and ‘making space for others’—even if they are different from ourselves. He noted that is a vision that is historically rooted in the indigenous circle of nations and the welcome of the first peoples. He spoke briefly about what he had learned about the Gandhian understanding of nonviolent dialogue as an inclusive collaboration of all parties aimed toward the social goal of the well-being of all. He noted that in the future it will be necessary to think more of our global identity than of national identities and that it will also be necessary to think of our identities not as the basis of our privilege but rather of the essential contributions that we have to make to the human ecosystem. (Talk included in Appendix 4).

He then introduced the second keynote speaker, PV Rajagopal.

PV Rajagopal Keynote

Rajagopal began by noting how important it was to hear the voices from the grassroots when we

think about the future. He spoke of the need to advance in our thinking. He pointed out how in India there had been an advance from religious tolerance to religious equality and then finally to the teaching of Vinoba Bhave that “all religions are mine”. He went on to speak of the urgent need to develop social and economic freedom for people along with political freedom. He identified one of India’s lessons for the world being the teaching that ‘renunciation is better than accumulation’. He spoke of his career confronting first, direct violence and then indirect social violence by working in the training of young people to practice active nonviolence.

He pointed out that teaching nonviolence is much more difficult than teaching violence. He stressed his vision of the transformative power of nonviolence, the idea of ‘fighting without hating’ and of mutual liberation of the oppressed and the oppressor. He noted that there was need for a deeper belief in the power of nonviolence to bring about real change. He continued with two stories illustrative of that. The first, from Ravindranath Tagore, was an imaginary dialogue begun by the setting sun. It asked, ‘who can take care of this darkness?’ And a single candle answered, ‘I can’. Rajagopal noted the power of a single candle, like the act of nonviolence, can have a great impact. The second story came from a dialogue between Gandhi and a history professor, who told him that all revolutions have been violent and asked how he could possibly imagine a nonviolent revolution. Gandhi answered, ‘Sir, you write about history; I make history’. The stories were intended to illustrate the power of nonviolence for social change and the commitment necessary for it.

In the questions that followed Rajagopal was asked first about the role of the state with regard to nonviolence. He noted that while he was advocating nonviolence as method for people to solve their problems, he was also hoping that the state itself could transformed and cease its use of violence. He argued that nonviolence also had a social or systemic dimension and said the nation state and the culture can be measured by the distance or proximity between what we think, what we say and what we do. He was

then asked about overcoming differences in the training program. He replied that his training programs helped people to go beyond their divisions and differences and that it trained people to be leaders in that process in their communities. Finally he was asked about the process by which the oppressed person may liberate both themselves and their oppressors. He replied that the model for training leaders in villages has been developed in six steps through a series of affirmations which are involved in the process of empowerment:

1. I must decide to change my situation. This is the root of empowerment;
2. I will not cut off the branch on which I sit (make my situation worse);
3. I need to move to change the situation I am in (This the beginning of action);
4. My moving won't change anything unless I move with others as a community;
5. I will move for my rights—but I will also move for your rights;
6. I will move for you and me and I will move nonviolently.

This process of empowerment is what can lead to mutual liberation. Finally he spoke of his organization's plan for a global march in 2019 from India to Geneva and of the role of young people in leading such a march.

The panel discussion followed. Schwartzentruber introduced the moderator Bill Bhaneja.

Bill Bhaneja, is a political scientist who worked as Canadian diplomat. He is the author of six books. Since retirement he has been a peace activist. He spoke briefly about his experience in the nation building process in both Canada and India. He recalled the trauma of the partition days in India and how they led him to recognize the value of Gandhi's teaching. He recalled listening to Gandhi's prayer meetings as a six year old. He talked of India's model of secular citizenship but also of the subsequent struggle to reconcile unity and diversity. He outlined his

experience of the Canadian process of repatriation of the Canadian constitution. But he noted that the debate continues about the inclusion of the French and Indigenous peoples in this process. He spoke of what he learned about the genocide enacted with regard to the First Nations in Canada. Nation building is an ongoing process.

He then introduced a panel of four experts who spoke in turn.

William Innes, a colleague of Macdonald and retired businessman, spoke first. He noted that it was remarkable that Canada even exists today. He noted that Canada is still a work in process and that much remains to be done. He spoke of how the dominant process in the world of commerce is the model of rationing space and noted Canadians in general to think of reframing space. He noted that confederation was in fact an act of reframed space. He spoke of the 150 year long dialogue of progressive reframing of space between anglophones and francophones. He noted that the colonial model had still to evolve in order become a place of mutual respect for indigenous Canadians. He suggested that in fact we need a new model and a fundamental reframing of the relationship.

Heather Nichol a professor of political geography at Trent University spoke next. She explained her area of work in circumpolar politics. She then spoke about her work on the Canadian Difference Project and interactive website. This project, she said, brought together subject experts and ordinary Canadians to discuss topics such as the place of First Nations and the role of Muslims/the Islamic community in Canada. There were many conversations she noted and they developed considerable dialogue. She thought it was the beginning of a decolonizing narrative.

Robert Lovelace, a professor of Indigenous Studies at Queen's, spoke next. He has been chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation. He spoke about the still present colonialism in Canada and the need for First Nations to defend themselves against its systemic abuse and violence. He questioned whether

nonviolence could be sufficient in this context. He stressed that indigenous people must be allowed to speak and act for themselves and that that is the only way beyond the colonial model. He argued that it was indigenous initiative that would transform the colonial model and mode of thinking still present in Canada.

Jill Carr-Harris was the final panel speaker. She noted her long-time work in India first for the UN and then with the NGO Ekta Parishad. She spoke of her personal transformation to a model of working with the poorest of the poor and especially with women. She argued that it was possible for a person of privilege to 'cross over' and act authentically for such women. She spoke about the desperate straits of village women in India and of Ekta Parishad's work with them.

The first session concluded at that point. It was followed by a dinner at which Girish Shah, Professor of Molecular Biology at Laval and Representative the Indo-Canadian Shastri Foundation (which supported the conference financially) spoke. He congratulated the organizers and attendees on a very positive beginning to the conference and noted that it was just the kind of event that Shastri wanted to fund.

The second day began with a presentation on Gandhi's political philosophy by Ramin Jahanbegloo, Executive Director, Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Nonviolence and Peace Studies; Professor and Vice-Dean, Jindal Global Law School, O. P. Jindal Global University, Delhi. Prof Jahanbegloo spoke at length about Gandhi's attempt to bring together ethics and political thinking in the form of a spiritual ethics and a secular politics. He stressed that Gandhi's key idea was that of "shared sovereignty" based on self-rule and self-transformation (Swaraj). He spoke of Gandhi's insistence that dissent meant to resist an unjust law and to question marginalizing political claims.

He went on to note the relevance of Gandhi's political thought in the context of global politics and the disenchantment with liberalism. He spoke of Gandhi's vision of a pluralistic universe in which we

come to accept the "otherness of the other" and not try to convert them into our sameness. He concluded by noting that the true subject of politics, for Gandhi, was not the state but the citizen and that the aim of such politics is to engage in the art of organizing a good society.

After many questions, the attendees went to their first roundtable workshop.

In the afternoon, the whole group convened for a panel discussion on Creating and Sustaining More Equitable Societies For Women. The participants were

Terri-Lynn Brennan: CEO, Inclusive Voices Inc. and Adjunct Professor, School of Child & Youth Care, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.; Reva Joshee: Associate Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto; Rachel Laforest: Associate Professor, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston. Sumon Majumdar (Moderator) Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Queen's University, Kingston.

Rachel Laforest spoke of challenges to creating equitable societies. Social changes and economic inequalities have created cultural polarization between minorities and majorities. These factors are present in Canada although we have not yet experienced the full impact of them. She argued that we must think about a more inclusive model of economic growth, for example. She noted that we need to develop spaces for widespread dialogue on social policy. Civil society groups are especially important partners for such dialogue and should be included more and more. All of this is important to addressing diversity through 'bridging and bonding'.

Terri-Lynn Brennan spoke of the territory of the Peacemaker and the peace that was struck. Peace is experienced in all cultures and nations, she noted. She referenced the article entitled 'Decolonization is not a metaphor' and noted that often the desire to reconcile on the part of settlers is simple a desire to avoid dealing with the guilt of having harmed others. She spoke of the deeply embedded historical attitude

in Canada of the need “to disappear the native” and pointed to its roots in many settlers, including Champlain. Champlain created the message of colonial control of the indigenous people, as did John A. Macdonald by his creation of the Indian Act. She also spoke of Duncan Campbell Scott and his efforts of social control of indigenous people through of the Indian Act in his tenure in the Department of Indian Affairs for 30 years.

Reva Joshee highlighted two crucial ideas from Gandhi. She contrasted Gandhi’s two ideas of truth: Truth and truth. The first one, Truth was equated with God, love, *ahimsa*. The way toward it is through truth and holding fast to it while also having humility to hear the truth of others. Gandhi’s notion of privilege is another important idea. For him it was a set of interlocking acts—overconsumption, ease of access and non-accountability. She went on to refer to the notion of selfhood from Ambedkar. He insisted that exclusion created marginalization and a weakened sense of selfhood. She concluded by referring to Nehru’s notion of active respect, an idea equivalent to accepting the otherness of the other. She noted her work in the development of ‘slow peace’, working at concrete details toward a larger goal. *Results: Working Group Documents/Report Outs*

Each of the working groups produced and presented a detailed report out of their discussions and objectives for further work. There was one report out from the Gender Group; two from the two Indigenous groups; two from the two Minorities groups and one from the amalgamated group on poverty. All of these reports are below in Appendix 5.

Conclusion

The general consensus of the organizers and participants was that the conference was a success in beginning a productive dialogue on several issues. As was noted above, several of working groups plan to continue their work and attempt to bring it into action.

Appendix I: Conference Design

Conceptual Design of the Conference

1. The design of the meeting was a ‘working conference’. While there were keynotes and one plenary presentation, the primary work of the conference was 6-8 person round table workshop groups. *These roundtable groups, with the assistance of facilitators from India and Canada, identified key issues in particular areas and then assessed the likelihood of success of various approaches for addressing them.* The participation of a diverse group of attendees enabled the creation of effective approaches. These approaches will be developed further after the conference and lead to our second planned conference in India in 2019.
2. The conference was carefully planned around two themes and four challenge areas. The two themes were ‘mutual accommodation’ (in the Canadian tradition) and ‘nonviolence/*ahimsa*’ (in the Indian tradition) as approaches to tackling societal issues and developing workable paths forward. The four challenge areas for the roundtable workshops were the issues of 1) Indigenous peoples; 2) minorities, religious and ethnic; 3) poverty and economic inequality and 4) gender-based struggles for justice.
3. With regard to the themes, the conference began with two keynote addresses by prominent advocates of the approaches from each country: William A. Macdonald and Rajagopal PV. These were followed by a panel presentation in which members from both countries amplified the themes. We urged all to do some reading in advance of the conference. William A. Macdonald’s writing on mutual accommodation can be found by downloading *Canada, still the unknown country*, found here: <http://wamacdonald.com/>. An introduction to –Rajagopal PV’s Gandhian work on nonviolent empowerment can be found here: https://youtu.be/GFXKVj_LNtk and in more detail here <https://youtu.be/VgpaTLkDn-E>
4. There was one plenary presentation during the conference to enhance the understanding of the themes. Specifically, Prof. Ramin Jahanbegloo spoke on Gandhi’s vision of nonviolent politics.

5. For the main work of the conference, the round table workshops, we invited facilitators from each country with detailed concrete experience in each challenge area. The facilitators had the important and complex task of assisting the participants in their work. The intercultural dialogue between Indian and Canadian participants was key to the process of integration and greatly enhanced the insights generated. Each facilitator worked closely with their counterpart from the other country and then to help integrate and present their work to all conference participants. Facilitators had primary responsibility for the process and outcome of the conference and they were carefully chosen for this work.
6. The process has spawned projects among participants between the countries and is generating ongoing dialogue and action, leading toward the next conference, proposed to be held in India in 2019.
7. The conference integrated participants from both countries in a way that broadened and deepened engagement. For the conference, we brought together experienced and young people with backgrounds in academia, business, and social activism. This fostered a rich dialogue among all of these groups.

Co-Organizers

Hugh Helferty, Executive-in-Residence, Smith School of Business. Kingston, Ontario Kingston, Ontario

Paul Schwartzentruber, Associate Member, Centre for the Study of Democracy and Diversity, Queen's University

Selected Participants:

Keynote Speakers

William A. Macdonald: <http://wamacdonald.com/>.

Rajagopal PV: <http://www.ektaparishad.com/en-us/about/messagefromrajagopal.aspx>.

Panelists (June 25th)

Bill Bhaneja (Moderator): Co-Founder, Canadian Department of Peace Initiative; Canadian diplomat (retired).

Jill Carr-Harris: <http://www.ektaparishad.com/UpcomingEvents/TabId/62/ArtMID/522/ArticleID/136/Creating-space-for-women-in-India%E2%80%99s-Ekta-Parishad.aspx>.

Bill Innes: Co-Founder, Canadian Difference Project; President, ExxonMobil Research and Engineering (retired).

Robert Lovelace: Adjunct, Global Development Studies Department, Queen's University, Kingston

Heather Nicol: Professor and Acting Director, School for the Study of Canada, Trent University, Peterborough

Plenary Speaker

Ramin Jahanbegloo: Executive Director, Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Nonviolence and Peace Studies; Professor and Vice-Dean, Jindal Global Law School, O. P. Jindal Global University, Delhi.

Panelists (June 26th)

Terri-Lynn Brennan: CEO, Inclusive Voices Inc. and Adjunct Professor, School of Child & Youth Care, University of Victoria, Victoria, B.C.

Reva Joshee: Associate Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Rachel Laforest: Associate Professor, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston.

Sumon Majumdar (Moderator): Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Queen's University, Kingston.

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Appendix 2: Talk by Mr. Hugh Helferty

Canada – India Conference Opening Remarks

Prepared by Hugh Helferty, April 25, 2017

Opening Remarks

Good afternoon and welcome to the conference! I want to thank each and every one of you for being here. Some of you have come all the way from India. I am very grateful that you have gone to such trouble to be with us. Others have walked across the street. I am grateful to you, too. All of you have committed to spend the next 48 hours learning from each other and working together to figure out how to make the world a better, more harmonious place, and how to get to that better place *faster*.

How to make the world a better place, and faster – that's an ambitious goal. Why would I think that in a couple of days we can figure out how to do that? If it was that easy, wouldn't we already be there?

It would be wrong not to acknowledge that the world is already better than it used to be in many ways. Life expectancy is up. Extreme poverty rates are down. Many things that were impossible in the past are almost routine today. Our colleagues who came from India flew here in less than 24 hours, a journey that once took weeks by ship. Communication around the world is essentially instantaneous. I could go on and on describing how the world is better now than it used to be.

Here in Canada, where we are celebrating the 150th birthday of our country, we have much to be thankful for. Our country is widely viewed as one of the best places to live in the world. My great-great-

grandfather came here from Ireland 180 years ago. He was one of many seeking to escape religious persecution and poverty and to make a better life for himself. Rather than being limited to leasing a few acres in County Donegal, he was able to work and save money to buy 200 acres in the Ottawa Valley. I grew up on the land that he cleared and my brother still lives there today.

The tradition of welcoming immigrants to Canada has continued. Just last year, Canadians were heralded around the world, not just for allowing 25,000 Syrian refugees to come but for the way in which it was done – with local communities or groups, in essence, adopting families and helping them settle.

India, too, has much to be proud of. The world's largest democracy, it has made huge strides in strengthening its economy. With its large population of bright and ambitious young people, it is clearly an emerging world power. In addition, many Indians have immigrated to other countries and made substantial contributions in their new homelands. In fact, about one-quarter of the people in this room are Indians who have become Canadians.

India has progressed greatly on the social as well as the economic front, much of it driven by social activists. Most of what I know about India I have learned from my wife, Sarita Karve, an immigrant to Canada, who comes from a family of social activists. Her great-grandfather was a math professor in Pune, India, in the 1890s when he did something outrageous, something no respectable Indian man would have done at that time – he married a widow!

The circumstances of young widows in India at that time were precarious. They weren't viewed as desirable marriage partners. They didn't have a husband or adult children to support them. And most of them didn't have an education that would enable them to support themselves.

Sarita's great-grandfather recognized that girls needed to be educated. This may not seem like a radical thought today, but 120 years ago when only about 5% of Indian women were literate, it was. He dedicated the rest of his life to the empowerment of women through education. He started a school for girls that grew to become a university. Today, over 25,000 students attend the Maharshi Karve Institute in Pune. Founded over 100 years ago, his was the first of what are now many women's colleges and universities in India.

This is but one example of the progress that has been made and the impact that social activists have had.

Despite all that has been achieved in Canada and India, much remains to be done. For instance, in both our countries the circumstances of indigenous persons remain poor. Whether the measure is health, life expectancy, education level or income, indigenous persons are, on average, much worse off. But this is not the only issue. The treatment of minorities, the level of poverty, and gender-based discrimination remain issues in both countries. We read of these problems in the newspapers and online every day.

How is it that, in 2017, so much remains to be done? What can be done to accelerate the pace at which we address societal issues? It is these questions that bring us together today.

- What Maharshi Karve did, and what is needed to accelerate progress today, was radical innovation. As I see it, there are three major steps in radical innovation.

- The first step is to recognize the problem or opportunity. The problem he took on was the dependence of women on men, which both disempowered them and left them at risk of being destitute.

- Second, he came up with a bold, innovative approach: provide girls and women with an education. This was a very powerful idea. Not only did it benefit the women he educated, it started the process of legitimizing educating women in India.

- Third, and perhaps most importantly, he acted on it. It is not enough just to have an innovative idea and then hope someone else will implement it. He opened a school for girls and he raised money from others to expand and ultimately start a women's college.

These three steps, recognizing a problem, conceiving an innovative approach and implementing it, are common to most radical innovations. Let me give you a different, albeit, less radical example of innovation.

We are sitting today in the Business School at Queen's University. When I was a student here 30 years ago, this was a good but, to be perfectly honest, not an exceptional business school. It had the standard 2-year MBA Program with the usual classes and with the summer off like all other business schools at the time. The faculty wanted the school to be better, but they didn't know how to get there. And then, about 25 years ago, they took a bold step. They replaced their 2-year MBA program with an intensive 12-month program. They recognized that it would be much better for students if they could come in, do the program in a shorter period of time and get back into the workplace faster. Since the shorter program offered greater value to the students, the school was able to charge higher tuition. The higher tuition was reinvested in the school to improve the faculty and the facilities. This led to more innovations so that, today, Queen's MBA is ranked highly not just in Canada but also internationally. About 60% of the students are from other countries – many come here from India.

Once again, you see the three steps: recognizing a problem, coming up with a bold solution and implementing it. This may not sound like a bold step today, but at that time when no one else was doing it, it was. Like many successful innovations, they appear obvious after the fact.

Of course, innovation is a constant in the world of business. The smart phone, the electric car, and e-business are examples of radical innovation. These major leaps spawn countless incremental innovations that enable society to be more efficient and effective.

There is one thing that the implementation of radical innovations almost always requires: the courage to lead change. Maharshi Karve was courageous when, against the will of many, he decided to educate girls. The Dean and faculty of the Business School here needed courage to break from how everyone else did MBA programs and move to a different model. Business leaders, like Elon Musk of Tesla, need courage and leadership when they introduce radical changes like the electric car.

I believe that radical innovation is essential in order for the pace of social progress to accelerate. The radical innovations that are needed will only be identified if we view the problems from a new perspective. That is why you are here. You are a diverse group of women and men from Canada and India. You are young and old. You are social activists and business people. You are from the arts, the sciences, engineering, and medicine. You are indigenous and from the religious life.

As different as you are, you all share one thing: a desire to make the world better and to accelerate the pace at which we get there. I know the task is difficult. But I have confidence in the ability of this unique group of people to take it on. Collectively, we have the capability to make a difference.

In a few minutes, Bill Macdonald will talk to us about Mutual Accommodation and how it has helped Canada not just to survive but to become a better country. Later this afternoon, Rajagopal will speak to us about Nonviolent Action. From the time of Gandhi to the marches of as many as 200,000 persons that Rajagopal has led, Nonviolent Action has been used to help address wrongs in India.

Both these approaches have had great successes. But both have left us with much to do. Our goal for the next couple of days is to build on these foundations. To understand what works in one situation and fails

in another. To find synergies between the approaches and conceive of totally new ways so that we can accelerate the pace at which we move forward.

Of course, our work will not be over in a couple of days. As a scientist I know that innovation requires both inspiration and perspiration. In the months ahead, we will build on the ideas that emerge and test them in the field. I'm sure that some will fail. But I expect that a few will prove effective and will help to drive more rapid social change.

And if they do, we will Gather on Common Ground again. We will gather in India in 2019, Gandhi's 150th birthday, both to reflect on what we have done and to explore new innovations that will enable us to move even faster to that better world we all seek.

Thank you.

Appendix 3: William McDonald Talk

NOTES FOR TALK ON MUTUAL ACCOMMODATION at Symposium on "Gathering on Common Ground: Building Harmony through Diversity in Canada and India"

Queen's University, Kingston Ontario, June 25, 2017

First, congratulations on the conference, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to lead off. There were three great mutual accommodation achievements in the 21st century. Two – Canada's mutual accommodation story and Gandhi's non-violent resistance achievements in India – will be discussed here. The third was the U.S.-led post-war inclusive global order achieved by broadening the inclusive global order and containing what could not be included at any given moment. When I told one of the greatest post-war U.S. psychotherapists about this U.S. achievement, he responded by saying this is what psychotherapists did – broaden the inclusive order in the psyche and contain what is not yet includable. It is a way of looking at things that has wide application and works.

Before we start I want to draw your attention to the small world that has brought us here. I first

got the idea of mutual accommodation some thirty-five or so years ago – not as a big idea or the only shared Canada story, but a better way of distinguishing Canada than its so-called special tolerance. I saw two different driving forces in Canada and the United States. Canada's drive was toward mutual accommodation. The American drive was toward division. Then two things happened. The great Canadian goaltender Ken Dryden told me in 2011 that "Canada needs a shared story to help reduce the Ottawa political fractiousness" he was experiencing as an MP at the time.

A week later, one of the world's leading authorities on resilience in children told me the normal way forward for children at risk was to look for sources of strength rather than weakness. Nonetheless, she said, every once in a while one child with no visible sources of strength of any kind would make it. They found it was because the child created stories about themselves, in a sense out of nothing. That showed how very profound stories can be and how the power we have as individuals comes, at the end of the day, from the stories we have about ourselves that tell us who we really are.

The story of the small world that has brought us here started with what was then and still is one of the most powerful multinationals in the world – Exxon-Mobil. In the early eighties, I was on the board with Bill Innes of its partly-owned Canadian subsidiary, Imperial Oil. Bill then left to head Esso Japan. He spent the last ten years of his career as head of one of the largest industrial research and engineering organizations on the planet – Exxon Mobil Research in New Jersey. We reconnected when he retired and returned to Canada. He became interested in exploring with me the idea of mutual accommodation as the shared narrative of Canada. In 2014, we launched the Canadian Difference project with Trent University, and distributed a 32-page paper at a special meeting of Canadian history academics in Charlottetown, PEI, in November 2014.

The new Globe and Mail editor, David Walmsley, saw that paper and suggested I write essays on a wide variety of mutual accommodation related

issues for the Globe. His goal was to get a national conversation going. Since then, I have come to see how big and inexhaustible the idea of mutual accommodation is. John Stuart Mill's book "On Liberty" took about 50,000 words. My essays on mutual accommodation for the Globe and Mail so far amount to some 55,000 words.

This is where we were about a year ago, when another Canadian, Hugh Helferty, who had worked under Bill Innes at Exxon-Mobil Research and Engineering, retired from Exxon. He took an interest in the project and got the idea of an India/Canada conference which led to today. As many here today will know, his wife is from India and her great-grandfather started the first women's university in India in Mumbai.

We now leave the Exxon/Mobil world of North America, and turn to my daughter Susan and her husband Nestor, who were in India for an extended period fifteen months ago. They spent about 10 days with her old high school friend, Jill Carr-Harris and her husband, Rajagopal. I put Hugh Helferty in touch with Susan while she was there and she put him in touch with Jill. The result is Jill is here today with her husband, who will deliver the second keynote.

Twelve days ago, our small world got even smaller. My wife, Molly Anne and I were having a morning coffee with Shawn Atleo, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. At the very end of two hours together with his now wife, Heather Squire, he mentioned that ten years ago, at the request of a Jill Carr-Harris, he participated in a 375-mile march with Jill and her husband in the 2007 Janadesh march of 25,000 "Adivasi" landless poor.

I have known Shawn Atleo for almost five years. We were introduced by a mutual friend who said I had to get to know him. We first met at lunch. He had seen a longer version of my first paper, where I had said that the First Nations (I am told we must now say "First Nations, Metis and Inuit") were Canada's biggest piece of unfinished mutual accommodation business. Our friendship started with that. We both now believe Canada and our indigenous

people have found a way forward and, while the journey will be long and hard for both sides, both will stick to the Truth and Reconciliation path until together we finish the unfinished mutual accommodation business.

Canada was lucky to come to understand it was necessary to put what works ahead of nationalism, ethnic difference, religion, class and ideology. This has made Canada not just a good country but a great country. Great countries (like great leaders) make many mistakes, including big ones, but they get the most important things right.

I will refer to three choices made by leaders and followers that have entrenched the Canadian mutual accommodation story. Example one is Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin in 1848, twenty years before Confederation. Example two is the election and re-election of Sir Wilfrid Laurier from 1896 to 1908. Example three is the way Pierre Trudeau's unilateral instincts were contained when he patriated the Constitution some 35 years ago.

The first example is LaFontaine and Baldwin. They led the only 1848 reform movement in the Western world to prevail as a responsible government and never lose its democracy. The francophone Catholic LaFontaine in Lower Canada needed the strength of the anglophone Protestant Baldwin from Upper Canada to overcome the anti-reform position of the Quebec clergy. Baldwin, in turn, needed the strength of LaFontaine to combat the anti-reform power of the Family Compact. Both were able to work together successfully at a time when differences of religion and nationality were intense everywhere. When LaFontaine lost his Quebec seat, and Baldwin lost his in Ontario, each ran successfully in the other's province, despite Ontario English Protestants who did not much like French Catholics and Quebec French Catholics who did not much like English Protestants. This accommodation showed, 20 years before Confederation, that a shared public purpose pursued through compromise could trump nationality and religion with Canadian voters.

The idea of restraint is also a striking element in this story. LaFontaine stood down the anti-reform

mob outside the Legislature in Montreal by asserting that reform would prevail without recourse to violence – a century before Mahatma Gandhi championed a very much larger and more consequential non-violence movement in India, Nelson Mandela in South Africa, and Martin Luther King in the U.S.

The second example is Laurier. His vision was political – to achieve peace, prosperity and public purpose through compromise and accommodation. Laurier said that the 20th century would belong to Canada. In many ways, that proved true, in the relative goodness of life available in Canada to ordinary people (never forgetting that indigenous people were largely left out). It became true primarily because Canada followed the Laurier vision of public achievements through compromise and restraint. The very election of Laurier, a francophone Catholic from Quebec, as prime minister only 30 years after Confederation, is but one example. This approach was so powerful and suited to Canada that it kept the federal Liberal Party in office three out of every four years over the following century. This is 180 degrees opposite to the American approach, which is to use no-compromise to counter-public purpose.

The third example deals with Pierre Trudeau's unilateral constitutional patriation effort. This is still not politically resolved in Quebec, because the Constitution was brought to Canada without Quebec's inclusion – something I said publicly at the time was wrong. It still remains so and will likely remain that way for a very long time. Canada's two most ideologically-driven and uncompromising either/or prime ministers of the last century, Pierre Trudeau and Stephen Harper, were each forced by Canadian voters to live within Canada's overriding mutual accommodation reality.

By contrast Mr. Trump and the Tea Party were spurred on by voter divisiveness, not held back by American voter moderation. Mr. Trudeau was forced by Canada's mutual accommodation ways to abandon unilateral constitutional patriation and accept the "notwithstanding clause" override to his Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This simultaneously made a Quebec language bill possible (which Trudeau did

not want), which in turn helped keep Quebec in Canada (which Levesque did not want). It needed the intervention of Western premiers, who would not accept the courts as the final word in every situation. It was a very Canadian outcome. Quebec stays but gets its language bill.

Much of the American politics is driven more by loathing of the other party and its leaders than by anything positive. Both federal Liberals and Harper made the same mistake. Harper thought voters loathed the Liberals more than they did. Liberals thought voters loathed Harper more than they did.

Mackenzie King called the CCF of 80 years ago “Liberals in a hurry”. Justin Trudeau in 2015 referred to Conservatives as our neighbours, not our enemies. By contrast, Hillary Clinton called Trump voters “the deplorables”. American voters are spurred on by the extremes of their leaders. Canadian leaders are contained by Canadian voter rejection of extremism.

Canada’s defining narrative began early, with the reliance, amid a difficult geography, of European traders and settlers on aboriginal people. Over the centuries, the nation that has emerged has continued – in fact, extended – this tradition of mutual shaping and accommodation. Canada has not been entirely free of violence, but its primary markers have been a blend of vision and of what works on the ground. In this way, it has become a great country unlike any other in history. It is a different kind of great country for a very different kind of world.

Canada’s three greatest visionary leaders – Samuel de Champlain, John A. Macdonald and Wilfrid Laurier – each combined vision, practical boldness and an ability to work and get along with a wide range of diverse people. Baldwin and LaFontaine, in 1848, showed that political and social reform could be achieved by non-violent means in an era when that did not happen elsewhere. All these leaders would see much of their visions embedded in the fabric of modern Canada.

Champlain wanted a new kind of society – one in which aboriginals and Europeans could live together in amity and with mutual respect.

Individualism underlies the American dream – the right to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” for every citizen that is reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The still unrealized Canadian dream comes from someone best remembered as an explorer, but who arrived here as a soldier familiar with the horrors of war in Europe.

Champlain had many dreams – one was the colonization of New France, which he did; the other, finding a passage to China, which did not exist.

The greatest of his dreams was humanity and peace. In North America, Champlain became a political leader and statesman who, through his ability to get along with different people, was able to convert dreams into reality. One of Canada’s greatest challenges is to complete Champlain’s great societal vision. If Canada had stuck with the Champlain vision, we would not still have the unfinished business of a traumatized indigenous people.

Canada had to accommodate people of French and English heritage, and of Catholic and Protestant faith. It had to be ready to stand up to the United States and to build a sound economy. Macdonald remains the country’s greatest builder, striving for a nation of “one people, great in territory, great in enterprise, great in credit, great in capital.” He got three big things right: Confederation, a transcontinental railway and containment of American expansionism. He also got English-French politics mostly right. Finally, when the country needed a looser federation than Macdonald sought, his Confederation later allowed it. But he got a very big thing wrong – the failure to extend inclusiveness to Canada’s indigenous people.

Macdonald found, in his partnership with George-Etienne Cartier, a way forward on the Quebec political front. And he recognized how fundamental mutual respect was to mutual accommodation: “Treat them as a nation, and they will act as a free people generally do – generously,” he said of French-speaking Canadians. Canada would be very different today if, instead of advancing residential schools, Macdonald had, as Champlain did, extended this inclusiveness to indigenous people.

Confederation was a first. No previous colonials had written their own constitution. It set in motion a coast-to-coast country that has survived and mostly thrived. Canada also has emerged as one of the better places for most to live. And, because of its achievements in mutual accommodation, it is one of history's truly remarkable countries. And because of the potential importance of this idea to the world right now, Canada has vastly more runway ahead than it has used so far.

The belief of Baldwin and LaFontaine in reform through non-violent means has become the Canadian way. Macdonald's vision of a coast-to-coast three-ocean country has led to the quality of life that Canadians enjoy. And Laurier's political model of accommodation has, for the most part, been followed. Together these visions have made Canada great and a country of unexpected magic – but because of its unfinished mutual accommodation business, still a flawed one!

Mutual accommodation involves two fundamentals. One is effective two-way communication – careful listening and careful speaking. The other requires a belief that a shared and meaningful order exists at the heart of things. Geography creates one kind of communication problem – it helps to explain why western Canadians feel alienated from Ottawa and Toronto, and why midwestern and southern Americans disdain Washington and New York. But breaking away from history can result in much bigger and deeper challenges than holding onto it. The U.S. Civil War lasted for just four years but its aftermath persists, and contributes to our neighbour's current political turmoil.

Canada did have its own break in history, but it was not abrupt. Rather, it was more a slow moving on while also holding on. Its English and French connections have remained, though they have gradually become less relevant. The American rupture between North and South was sudden, violent and destructive. Canada's recent Quebec existential crisis was peaceful and lasted for decades. Words prevailed over force. These differences have produced very

distinctive communication, institutional and socio-cultural results in each country.

Champlain's vision was societal; Macdonald's was national; and Laurier's was for a different way of doing politics. All three visions survive and thrive. The visions of its founders have shaped Canadian society in ways that have become mutually reinforcing. Champlain's desire for a diverse and peaceable society remains a dominant, if not yet fully realized, aspiration. Much remains to be done in mutual accommodation with the indigenous people and, now, in finding a way to cope with anxieties about extreme Muslim groups, fed in part by a fearful neighbour and its hyped-up media.

No one thing is ever everything. I first saw mutual accommodation simply as the distinctive drive Canadians have. I have come to see it as much more – as a better way of going about things everywhere and at all times. And a way the world urgently needs much more of.

I have come to see mutual accommodation as one of the four better ways humans have found to go about things. The other three are freedom, science, and compassion. The West over the last five centuries has been dominated by freedom and science. The world has become increasingly hard to manage because of the resulting imbalances. The West, to be manageable, needs more mutual accommodation and compassion – for reasons of basic survival and thrival. Canadians have exhibited a stronger drive toward mutual accommodation than any other country – especially in comparison with a United States driven by division. Mutual accommodation – the shared Canadian story – is crucial to Canada today and to all the world. The world needs a global conversation about mutual accommodation. This puts Canada and mutual accommodation at the centre of the next stage in world history.

The United States has been great in freedom and science – the two most transformative forces for doing things in a better way since the Renaissance. There is still more to do about science and freedom, but they need to be better balanced by mutual accommodation and compassion.

Since its beginnings – first Quebec in 1608 and then Confederation in 1867 – Canada has had three very big achievements. First, it has survived – not just as a nation but as one that includes the distinctive province of Quebec. Second, it made itself coast-to-coast. Finally, despite its divisions of nationality, culture, language, religion and class, it has developed a political and socio-cultural outlook that works. It has one big failure with its indigenous people which it is starting to address.

Use words, not force. Make railways, not war. These overly simple ideas capture a Canadian story that differs from those of most countries. Canada's story has increasingly been driven by persuasion. The American story has more often been shaped by war and violence: the Revolutionary War, Civil War, Indian Wars, Mexican Wars, lynching and 300 million guns in private hands. As one of the great American historians put it over 25 years ago in Boston, the United States was created by force and preserved by force. He told us, there was nothing – and he repeated, “I mean nothing” – the United States would not do to preserve the Union. Canada accepted, unlike the Americans, that Quebec could choose to leave. After several decades, Quebec has decided not to do so. Both Quebec and Canada are the stronger for it.

In the past, Canada's main mutual accommodation challenges have revolved around religion and language. Today they revolve more around identity and differences. Our sense of being different – as individuals and groups – is what gives us strength in, and meaning for, our world. What we need to talk more about is the possibility that the differences on which our sense of identity rests can be strengthened, not threatened or weakened, by making room for the differences of others. Our anxieties in Western countries revolve around our identities and also underlie today's populism. We cannot simply tell others not to be anxious or call them names, as Hillary Clinton did. We have to talk about anxieties and find ways to work our way through them.

Thank you again for today's conference and for giving me the chance to participate. An American journalist friend, who died much too young fifty years

ago, told me just before he died that he had decided the big difference between Canada and the United States was that in his country, you had to shout to be heard – in Canada you did not. Fifty years later the small world of Canada and friends from India will not need to shout to be heard. That is a huge strength and a huge blessing.

A few years after my friend died, I realized “celebrity” is a form of shouting. This helps us understand why there are so many celebrities in the U.S. and so few in Canada. Mutual accommodation is a long and hard path. Freedom has taken centuries to take hold. Mutual accommodation. Shouting is a harder way forward. The Canadian difference – the Canadian advantage – may be that we can hear each other without having to shout?

Appendix 4: Paul Schwartzentruber Talk and Introduction

Let me begin by echoing Hugh's words of welcome and his admiration for your willingness to come and join us in this good work of dialogue, debate and discovery. We have been working together on organizing this conference for almost a year and in the course of that we have discovered a number of surprising ways in which our paths have crisscrossed in all sorts of places: in the Ottawa Valley, in Halifax, in Guelph and Toronto and even in India! I say ‘surprising’ because we have in fact lived very different lives. I like to think that that difference has enhanced our collaboration and that we have personally discovered a lot of common ground through the process. In fact, it has been a very practical exercise in nonviolent dialogue and in mutual accommodation.

Let me tell you a bit about myself at the same time as I explain how I understand the themes of our conference.

Geographically Canada is a sometimes harsh, but also spacious and bounteous country. Since the people who come here *come to belong to the land* (even more than the land belongs to the people), this spacious and sometimes trying land of Canada shapes the character of its people around certain essential values: neighbourliness, mutuality and

accommodation. Of course, we can go astray (usually through greed and self-assertion) but when we do it is precisely by abandoning these essentially Canadian values rooted in the land itself.

Like Hugh, my ancestors came as settlers to this country. My father's family came in 1820's, among other Anabaptist religious refugees and settled in the area west of Kitchener. They came here because they had reached an accommodation with the English crown that allowed them to practice their religion, live a simple rural life and not serve in the military—all in keeping with their deep belief in the nonviolence taught by Jesus. As soon as they arrived they came to another accommodation with the Indigenous people among whom they settled, an agreement to live side by side in peace that led, for a long time, to an open-hearted cooperation in which they, for their part, learned to how to survive in this harsh land from the indigenous peoples. They had strong convictions and a determination to live in a life in keeping with their values: Canada made space for them and they accommodated themselves to their new neighbours. I don't imagine in any way that this was easy but they made it work.

When my mother's family came from southern Italy a hundred years later in the 1920's they came as economic refugees who found work as laborers in the factories that were then being built as part of the modernization of Canada between the wars. It was working in one of those Toronto factories during the war that my mother and father met. This accommodation to Canada was different and also took several generations of struggle and hard work to evolve. I used to think that I was the result of that accommodation. Now I know that it is still ongoing in my children and grandchildren.

There is nothing really special about this story of my ancestors—in fact, I tell it because it is a very typical story for many Canadians. There are many of us who have come here at one time or another as settlers, or refugees and to some degree and in some form we have been welcomed into the community that was already here and was already Canada. This tradition goes back to the first settlers who were

welcomed by the people indigenous to the land. I think it is this *welcoming in*, and this *making space for others*—even if they are different from ourselves, that is at the deepest level my vision of Canada as a country. It is a vision that is historically rooted in the welcome of the first peoples of this land and in the indigenous vision of a circle of nations. Sadly, many of us have often forgotten that, just as we forgotten that we were once settlers and refugees.

I have to admit that I didn't always appreciate this about Canada. In fact, when I was younger I very much took it for granted. It wasn't until in my late fifties after I spent some time over five years in India as volunteer for Ekta Parishad that this vision of Canada come into focus for me more clearly. A great Indian sociologist Ashis Nandy says that what we primarily learn from cross-cultural encounter is how our own culture has in fact shaped us—we see ourselves in the mirror of the difference. I am grateful for what I learned about myself as a Canadian in India. I am also grateful about what I began to learn directly in India about *nonviolence as an activity and a process for creating inclusion and justice*. Let me say a few words about that.

Just being in India can be a very engrossing experience. I often felt that I was in a small boat with one oar in the middle of a very large ocean. Moreover, traveling around India *at the village level* with Rajaji and Jill and other Ekta Parishad volunteers, I discovered an India that is not the one you would see as a typical tourist. In that India, I quickly learned, the stranger is welcomed with honour: that happened to me over and over again, in the villages of Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh, in the jungles of Orissa, among the rice paddies of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Over and over again I met people who had almost nothing and lived in the most dire of circumstances and yet we were graciously willing to take me into their homes, feed me and just talk together. It was both humbling and deeply transformative for me.

Over time, I began to understand, with the help of Rajaji, that Gandhian nonviolence is built upon this basic human openness and talking together. The poor, who cannot afford to build walls around their

lives and are forced to live them out in the open, so to speak, are very skilled at this basic dialogue and are willing teachers of it. They are also very skilled at *enduring* in the face of injustice and suffering. I remember participating in one day long *padyatra* or *foot march* led by *Ekta Parishad* and realizing that these rail-thin men and women walking solidly beside me were, in fact, by that act of simply walking down the highway saying something very profound: they were refusing to be ignored or forgotten. I also realized that they were so much stronger in their conviction than I was, so much more able to see it through to the end.

Now this balance between conviction/commitment, on the one hand, and the constant openness to dialogue on the other, are one way of understanding the dynamic character of nonviolence or what Rajaji calls ‘active nonviolence’. Gandhi himself was known for holding, in tension, these two aspects of nonviolence. The first was the belief that it was the purpose of the human being—each of us individually, to listen carefully to ‘our inner voice’ or conscience and discover what we understood to be the truth—*satya*. Having found it, we should feel compelled to cling to it no matter what the cost—*satyagraha*. This second belief however was the openness to dialogue: Gandhi knew the deep wisdom of the old Jain story which tells of five blind people, each describing an elephant, only by the part of it that they could touch with their hands. This recognition that each person has only a partial understanding of truth—*anekantevada*, is what makes nonviolent dialogue possible and necessary: we need to hear the perspectives of others, to learn from them and to accept them—otherwise we may find ourselves holding the elephant’s tail and thinking that that is all there is to it.

This means that there is no shortcut to the truth, there is only collaboration. The alternative to collaboration is always some form of violence—the exclusion or discounting of other people and their views. Violence is a sign of our failure to include, and having included, to genuinely collaborate, and having collaborated to accept the differences that remain.

Including, collaborating and accepting difference are the marks of a true and active nonviolence. You will hear more of that in the next couple of days, but for moment, just remember holding the elephant by the tail!

Let me now say a few words about what we are hoping to do here.

Canada and India have shared the common destiny of being measured primarily by the rich diversity of their peoples, and also by their dreams of being nations of mutuality and states of inclusivity. This common destiny is the beacon of the hope that brings us together in the work of collaboration. As people raised in these societies, we also know that this is not just something abstract: we have a knowledge of what mutuality and nonviolence means in our bones—and also of what its opposite is. I want to encourage us to work, over the next couple days, with our lived experience of mutuality as Canadians and Indians (and others), to draw on that experience in all its richness as we work together.

I think that it is also important if we are to begin this work genuinely, that we do so with open eyes and a respect for the full truth. And the full truth is that both countries have fallen sadly and tragically short of those very ideals of mutuality too often. I mean to refer here to our continued failures in our relationships with the first peoples, with religious and ethnic minorities, with regard to the equal rights due to women and as well as those in the LGBTQ and transgender communities who struggle for justice. Finally we have failed in our relationship with the far too many who continue to be excluded from our common’wealth’ in lifelong and intergenerational poverty.

It is my firm conviction that we need to understand these failures in our midst if we are to move forward. I am reminded of a powerful word spoken in the Truth and Reconciliation Report by one of the survivors, Chief Ian Campbell. He said “Our history is your history as Canada...Until Canada accepts that, this society will never flourish to its full potential”(183). I think we could hear the same truth

being spoken from religious and ethnic minorities, from women, from gay and transgender people and from the people who live in poverty among us. We need to hear this truth, to rethink and rewrite our history in order to include their stories in *the* story. And accordingly we need to change our own behaviours and our claims to entitlement. True mutuality, true nonviolence can only be based, as Gandhi argued on the ‘well-being of all’ and the inclusion of all (*sarvodaya*). The well being of the few or even the majority is not enough.

Like Hugh, I have hopes that we will find some innovative solutions to the new challenges of diversity which face us now and in the future. The changes that we face in the next generation will be vast and complex. It is difficult to avoid recognizing that the global economic order has created a very disproportionate patchwork of power and prosperity leaving many millions disenfranchised from the fruits of prosperity and at risk of ecological catastrophe. One consequence of this is that there will be many more ‘refugees’ from all directions and ‘borders’ will be less and less defensible and defined. It will be necessary soon for us to think more about our global identity than our ‘national’ identities. Another consequence will be that livelihood resources will need to be shared equally and equitably—across the spectrum of diversity. We will have to re-conceive our (ethnic, national and religious) differences not as the basis of privilege and entitlement (as in ‘us against them’ for what is ‘ours’ not ‘yours’) but as one essential contribution to the whole human ecosystem. And we will have to learn to put that eco-system back inside the planetary eco-system. To this we will need a *renewed* vision of mutual accommodation and of nonviolence.

So let us begin to work where we really are now and to work toward a future that is possible.

We have two rich histories and many traditional and modern resources—above we have a bountiful diversity of peoples with a wealth of experience.

Calling on all of that, we only need the courage to be truly open, to collaborate and to innovate together.

On that note I would like to turn to welcome a very inspiring man to speak to us, Pv Rajagopal or Rajaji as he is known.

As I was considering how to introduce him today, naturally I first considered describing his monumental achievements—the many national footmarches or padyatra which he inspired, organized and led, Janadesh in 2007, Jansatyagraha in 2012 in which over a quarter of a million people left their daily lives and marched for almost a month along the national highway from Gwalior to Delhi. Those marches and the achievements in government legislation which resulted from them are enormous public accomplishments toward the goal of social justice. But they led me to think of the lifetime of work that was the foundation of those accomplishments. I picture that foundation as a kind of giant banyan or pipal tree that one sees everywhere in India in the village and town squares. I caught just a glimpse of this work during my travels with Rajaji. It is work of visiting far flung villages and forests spread all across India, a work of meeting thousands and thousands of ordinary people one by one and listening to their struggles. A work of empowering them—in that uniquely Gandhian way—so that they come to see their own strength and resources, so that they see their own lives in terms of the power to bring about change, and not as hopeless or inevitable. This is a work that has also raised up and trained a second and third generation of young leaders and advocates. A work that has put down deep roots and extended far reaching branches. And yet You would barely notice all of this when you met Rajaji. You always had the feeling that he had just happened by, and was just happy to meet you and hear about your life. ‘No big deal’ as we say in Canada. You might walk by that great old banyan tree too and think, ‘no big deal’. But believe me, it is a big deal and I am privileged to have met him.

*Appendix 5: Workshop Reports**

* To be published in the next issue

Monday, 13 November 2017

Remember peace and nuclear disarmament on 'Remembrance Day'

Peace and nuclear disarmament was the theme of a Remembrance Day meeting at The Canadian Tribute to Human Rights (Human Rights Memorial) in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on 11 November 2017.

Koozma J. Tarasoff



Morgan Gay, Pacifi organizer, speaks at The Canadian Tribute to Human Rights.

About 25 people observed two minutes of silence to remember all victims of all wars around the world, current and past; and to learn from the past, work for peace and tackle the causes of war. The event was organized by Pacifi. 17 photos of this event.



Our 'peace' group was miniscule compared to the thousands who were at the 'official' event at the National War Memorial near Parliament Hill, 600 metres north of us on the same street.



David Thompson

After gathering at the monument, we walked 2 blocks south to the Fox & Feather Pub and Grill to relax and hear historian Dr. David Thompson, University of Ottawa, explain the origins of Remembrance Day and efforts by veterans to promote peace. He listed five lessons from the anti-war vets:

1. The importance of veterans in peace making.
2. Postwar experience matters.
3. Respecting veteran intelligence in discerning the causes of war by colonialism and 20th century capitalism is useful.
4. There is recognition that one can be anti-war, but not pacifist.
5. The battle is for peace, freedom and economic equality.

A rich discussion followed. These are some of the many noteworthy comments.

- The white poppies that the activists wore symbolized all soldiers and civilians, as compared to the red poppies which generally relate to the military dead. White poppies have been around since 1933.
- A Moslem fellow from Somalia asked: 'What is peace? By the gun, or Gandhian peace?'
- J. S. Woodsworth was cited as a hero for peace because he had the courage to stand up in the Canadian House of Commons in 1939 to oppose Canada going into war.
- 'What is freedom and democracy?' Is it freedom to starve?
- A Quaker from out of town suggested that war is 'counterproductive'; that in today's world, it threatens our ability to deal with climate change and the future of our civilization.
- A prominent Canadian poet Henry Beissel said that peace is complicated. Economic corporate interests rule the world including hijacking the mainstream media, and making us consumers of extreme capitalism. 'I despise Remembrance Day because it glorifies wars, resulting in perpetual indoctrination of our youth for wars....What freedoms are we protecting? Canada has not been attacked for 200 years....We are closer to war today than in 1948. I am not sure what to do?' More than ever before, said Dr. Beissel, we need more cooperation to deal with issues of equality,

injustice, and local services. To achieve this, we have a huge opportunity if we decide to stop wars and divert resources to urgent human needs.

- Perhaps a backlash to President Donald Trump will lead us away from emphasis on violence and wars?
- A Pakistani man: 'If we survive, it will be through sheer luck.'
- It was noticed that Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has reneged on his promise to follow through with voting reforms resulting in a loss of democracy. Does this mean that all politicians are vulnerable to lying when pressured by corporate interests which fund the particular party?
- 'I'm not cynical, not pessimistic, but believe that humans have the intelligence to survive.'
- 'Who is the real hero: the soldier or the peacemaker?'
- The annual anti-militaristic demonstration at CANSEC near the Ottawa International Airport has been successful in holding up cars for several kilometres and getting the message out that disarmament is the way of the future. Pacifi organizers invite activists to continue this action in May 2018.

Following the 1.5 hour afternoon session, Thompson said that 'this was the best Remembrance Day' that he experienced in his life. I was impressed, too.

I wanted to title this story with 'Armistice Day' because I prefer the original historic name, but most people have forgotten it. In my opinion as a Doukhobor, the meaning of the holiday was changed with the new name. I do not want to remember war with red poppies, rather to remember peace symbolized with white poppies, meaning no more wars.